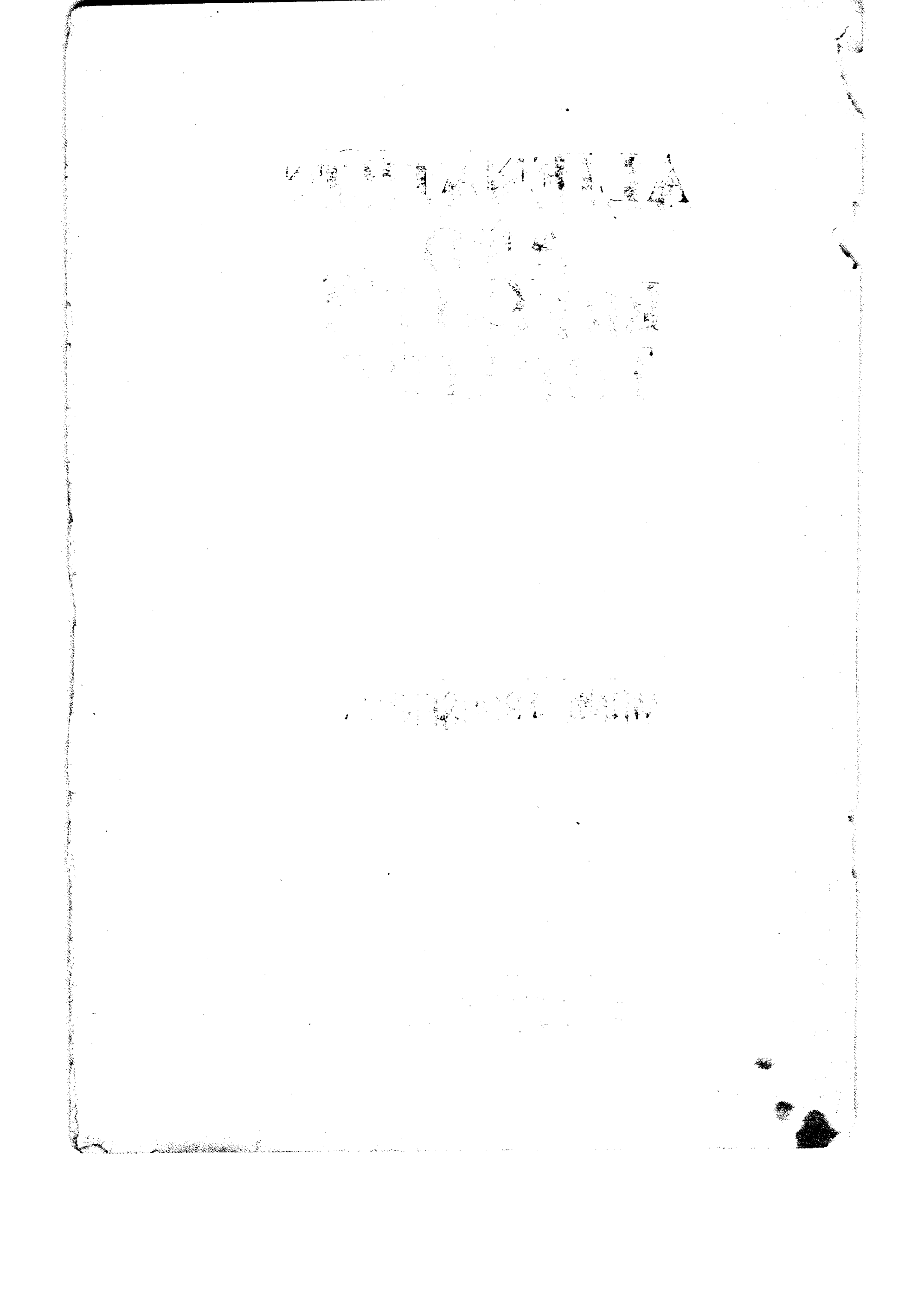
ALIENATION AND BRECHT'S THEATRE

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PREFACE

In his book **The Literary Thesis,** which is a valuable and indispensable guide to research, George Watson distinguishes between two broad kinds of applications to graduate work:

> In the more numerous and less distinguished category, the application arises from a general inclination to continue the life of a student, and the proposal, which is often couched in a style of affected enthusiasm, is an invention by the applicant which is designed to disguise that inclination. In the second and rarer category, which the graduate programmes of universities exist to welcome and serve, the application arises from an authentic ambition to answer a significant question of literary history which existing publications do not answer, or false emphasis, or sheer misunderstanding. These are the genuine **applications.(1)**

The question which our work tries to answer is contained in the title of the book which, in turn, implies two issues: the concept of alienation, and Brecht's idea of alienation as theme and technique as conceived by him in his theoretical writings and as practised in his plays. Brecht poses the problem of man's condition of alienation under capitalism and the vital need for a solution through consciousness whereby the theatre functions as an effective socio-political medium to enable man to reach a state of de-alienation. Hence, our book is an attempt to locate the main "question" that preoccupied Brecht, which we have called the "pivotal idea", around which his creative work (both theoretically and theatricaly) revolved and which was meant to be the answer to the question that preoccupied him. This pivotal idea is the concept of alienation. Although the concept of alienation is not explicitly mentioned by Brecht as being the central theme of his plays, it is the major qualifying feature of his works. This is confirmed by Brecht's disciple

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1. George Watson, **The Literary Thesis** (London: Longman, 1970), p. 9.

Manfred Wekwerth : "Defamiliarization (Verfremdung) was not originally a theatrical concept, but a philosophical one. It signifies a definite way of looking at the world, derived from the materialist dialectic". Being a central or major concept, it is latent because it is fertile, deep and complex. Hence, it may not be presented or exposed in a direct manner, but through the other related ideas which are generated by and revolve round the pivotal idea. Consequently, in approaching Brecht's works, the logical thing to do would be to start from the centre and then proceed outwards toward the other issues. That is, in order to discover the author's system of thought, the pivotal idea is indispensable.

In tracing the origin and development of Brecht's concept of alienation which constitutes the essence of his theatre, one has to go back to the origin of the concept as propagated in the field of philosophy, particularly by Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. This will establish a link between the philosophical concept and its propagation by Brecht in the field of drama. It will also help in answering some critics who approach Brecht's theatre by proceeding from the false emphasis on technical devices. In this connection we refer to Watson's idea about the interdisciplinary approach to research work :

> A subject which relates literature to some bordering discipline such as social or political history, musicology, philosophy, iconography or linguistics may have its unique attraction: the prospect of achieving a strikingly original discovery, it is often hoped, through importing into literary studies the findings of other discplines.(2)

The second half of the twentieth century is characterized by two major aspects : the phenomenon of alienation and unity of knowledge. Alienation, as a characteristic feature of the present time, is described by Schacht : "There is almost no aspect of contemporary life which has not been discussed in terms of 'alienation'. Whether or not it is the salient

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2. George Watson, **Op. Cit.,** p. 22.

feature of this age, it would certainly seem to be its watchword".(3) The second aspect, unity of knowledge, is summed up by A. Koestler's statement which paraphrases the thesis of his theory: "Bisociation is the essence of creative activity"(4) Koestler uses the term "bisociation" to mean creation which results from the combination of two interrelated disciplines, whereby a unity between two fields of human knowledge is established producing, thus, a new synthesis. Literature, as a flied of human knowledge, reflects those two aspects of contemporary life. If creativity or originality lies in the ability to relate two fields (e.g. science and philosophy), creativity in the field of literature consists in the relation between philosophy and the various forms of literature. Consequently, the task of the researcher would be to reveal this intimate relation by adopting a method of "bisociation" in the critical analysis of the new synthesis (i.e. the writer's work) which is the outcome of this combination and which reflects the author's creative originality.

The major question of the book is dealt with by relating philosophy and drama. In this sense, drama is not approached from a purely aesthetic view, that is, by concentrating on one element. For to discover the interrelation between drama and philosophy the dialectical relation between content and form, that constitutes the organic unity of the dramatic work, the content should be emphasized. However, philosophy has many diverse meanings depending on the different philosophical systems, some of which disregard content and give primacy to form. This means that one should be aware of the relation between philosophy and drama in order to realize that the formalization of the content itself represents a certain philosophy. Hence, as students and researchers of drama our major responsibility is to remove the alienation between philosophy and drama by giving adequate attention to the content. On the theoretical level such alienation results from fragmentation of knowledge. Hence, to solve the problem of intellectual alienation, unity of knowledge

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3. Richard Schacht, **Alienation** (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970), p. 1.
4. Arthur Koestler, **The Act of Creation** (London: Pan Books, 1977), p. 231.

is essential. In this manner, the alienation between philosophy and literature, which causes the fragmentation of both fields, could be removed.

The value of drama in the case of Brecht's theatre lies in revealing the value of philosophy and philosophical thought. In other words, the real importance of drama is that it reveals the great and deep human problems within any period. In this sense, drama teaches us to understand the conflicts in history as not merely the sum total of the individual and the movement of society but to see them in connection to each other. Hence, to approach content, which incorporates the socio-cultural spirit of the historical period in isolation from form, weakens the cultural role of literature in relation to human civilization. Brecht's theatre represents the intimate relation between philosophy and literature because his theatre is basically philosophical. His drama provides a perfect example in which philosophical thought and artistic creation are combined, and in which the philosopher emerges as a dramatist. Therefore, the prevalence of the philosophical aspect over the dramatic is justified by the dialectical relation between the two disciplines in which philosophy sometimes emerges and becomes prevalent. Moreover, we should always remember that Aristotle, who laid down the theoretical foundations of drama in his **Poetics,** is originally a philosopher. Bearing this in mind, the artificial dichotomy between philosophy and drama soon disappears. Brecht's vision of the world is determined by the problem of alienation, which he intellectually understood as a philosophical concept and actually perceived and experienced as a characteristic phenomenon of the contemporary capitalist society. The specifity of Brecht's theatre and, hence, its originality, lie in the synthesis between philosophy and drama. The outcome of this synthesis is the theory of alienation as content and form. Brechts' synthesis of philosophy and drama is qualitatively different from the classic Aristotelian drama (which also represents a synthesis between drama and philosophy) because it is placed within a revolutionary, theoretical framework, i.e. scientific socialism. The revolutionary scientific content of Brecht's new synthesis is the essential feature of Brecht's contribution to drama. Brecht's theoretical writings are specific and distinct because they are the writings of a philosopher being a dramatist,

i.e. a dramatist who is a practising philosopher, and not a philosopher per se.

The philosophic nature of Brecht's theatre stems from his theatrical treatment of the philosophical concept of alienation as a contemporary phenomenon. Hence, any study of Brecht's theatre should proceed from an examination of the plays in the light of the issues they present. The issues may be political, socio-economic, and psychological. Thus, the problem combines more than one field of knowledge. The question how to make man, the distorted, alienated man, conscious that this distortion is the result of specific socio-economic relations, can be only considered in terms of a content that represents the distorted relation in a form that is determined by that content and correlates to it. The form, in turn, reacts upon the content and develops it, though the content is prior to form. Hence, the dialectical relation between content and from determines the growth and development of form. Brecht's formulation of his theatrical theory of alienation effects proceeds from a three-dimensional formula : philosophic, socio-economic, aesthetic, in which the aesthetic dimension is an organic part of the whole. The creative originality of Brecht's theatre lies in presenting a new synthesis resulting from the combination between philosophy and drama. Hence, in approaching Brecht's theatre we should bear in mind the following :

> Forms are historically determined by the kind of content they have to embody ; they are changed, transformed, broken down and revolutionized as that content itself changes. Content in this sense is prior to form. Form produced by content, is identical and one with it, and though the primacy is on the side of content, form reacts on content and never remains passive. This dialectical conception of the form-content relationship sets itself against two opposite positions. On the one hand, it attacks that formalistic school for whom content is selected merely to reinforce a certain form. But it also criticizes the notion that artistic form is merely an artifice imposed on content. This means that form is ideological. The relationship between form and content is determined by the fact that the new form is discovered and evolved under the

> pressure of an inner need which has its social roots. Significant developments in form, then, result from significant changes in ideology. They embody new ways of perceiving social reality.(5)

Hence, to understand and assimilate the ideological content of Brecht's theatre, it is necessary to place it within the context of the age. Matthew Arnold observes :

> The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas when it finds itself in them; .... but it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely ; and these it is not so easy to command... because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment;...(6)

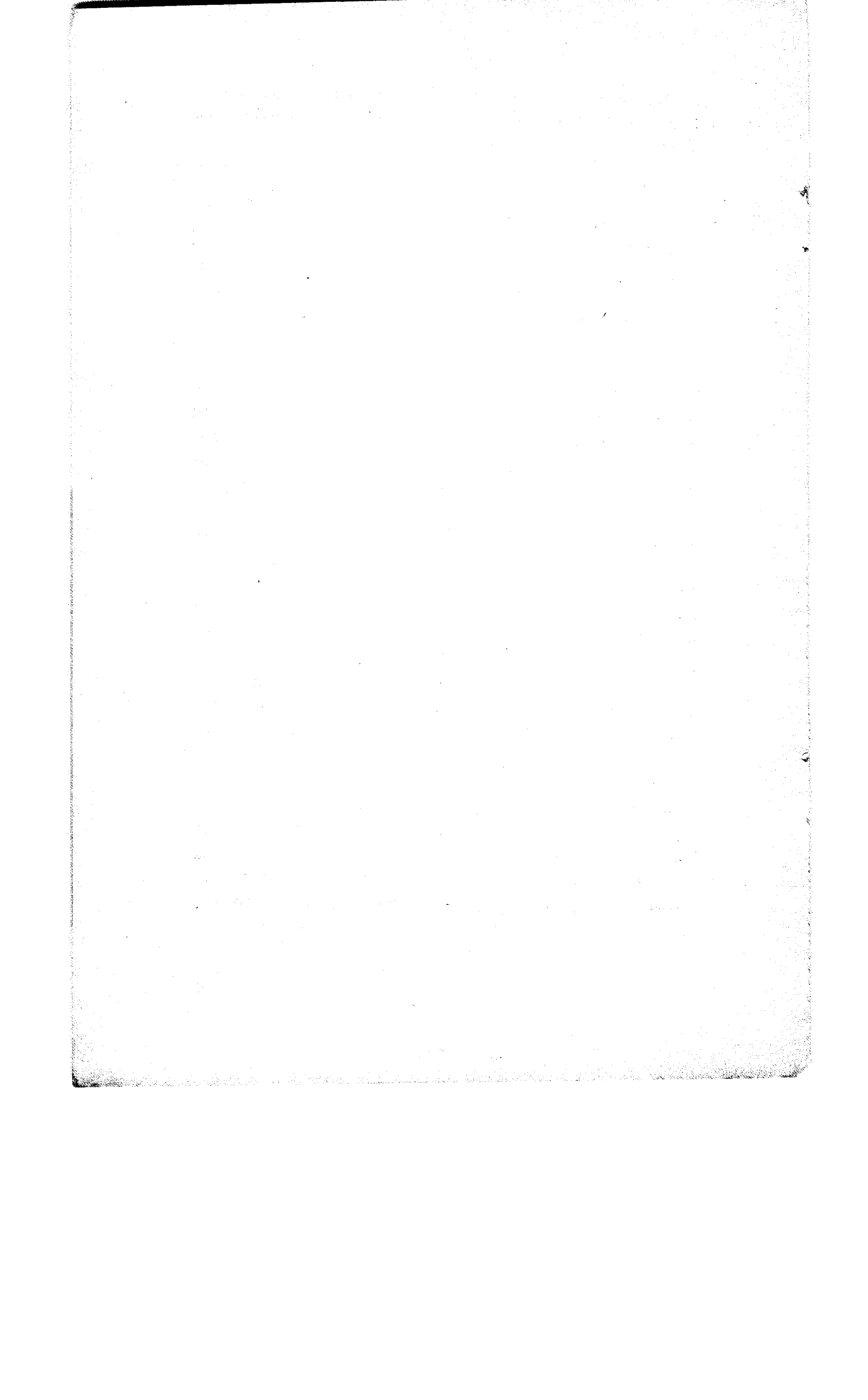
Any literary work is the product of the subjective factor, or what Arnold refers to as "the power of the man", and the objective factor ("power of the moment") represented by the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of the time. The originality of Brecht's theatre lies in the fact that it reflects the spirit of the twentieth century through the concept of alienation and unity of knowledge. What distinguishes Brecht's theatre from other literary-philosophical trends is the fact that he treats the human condition within a concept that synthesizes drama and philosophy, namely, alienation. Hence, Brecht's philosophical theorizing of alienation is contained within the framework of drama. Consequently, to limit our appreciation of Brecht's theatre to his technique of alienation, is to overlook the radical change in the content of his theatre. The originality of

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5. Terry Eagleton, **Marxism and Literary Criticism** (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 22.
6. Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" **Selected Poetry and Prose,** ed. Frerick L. Mulhauser (New York: Holt Reinehart and Winston, 1953), p. 140.

Brecht's theatre can be only understood by relating the content contained in the Marxian interpretation of alienation, to the new cultural frame, scientific socialism, which Brecht adopted as a philosophical basis for his theatrical theory and practice of epic theatre, and by means of which he achieved the innovation in technique, that is, through the synthesis between philosophy and drama. The links of this combination are the objective conditions .ie. the socio-political conditions of the time. Hence, the social function of ideas about man's potential drive to change and control reality. Consequently, the essence of his theatre is to popularize drama in the sense of making it an effective medium by which man can change and control reality.

To understand the nature of the synthesis which Brecht's theatre represents, through the combination of philosophy and drama, a special method of analysis and interpretation should be adopted. This method stresses the dialectical relations between fields. In this case, the fields are literature and philosophy, politics, economics. This method, therefore rejecets the different schools of criticism which approach the work by stressing mechanical relations between technical devices separating, thus, the different fields of knowledge. Hence, the method does not accept unilateral interpretations either those of the formalistic school that reduces all factors to form, or the sociological school which reduces all factors to society. In this manner, it is not possible to understand the plays by concentrating on the technical side only. For a true understanding of the work, it is essential to place it within the socio-cultural field out of which it emerged. Consequently, we may say that the technique is influenced by that socio-cultural content. Therefore, if in our discussion of the plays we stress the sociological and philosophical aspects, it is with the intention of understanding the technique and not neglecting it. That is, by giving a special attention to the sociological and philosophical aspects, a clearer and deeper understanding of the technique is made possible. Thus, this method neither accepts the school of art for art nor that of art for society because it involves a certain synthesis which incorporates the two contradictory approaches. The new synthesis, which is the outcome of the method, is the supersession of this contradiction.



CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION

The concept of alienation is the central point of the Brechtian theatre. For one reason, this concept touches upon the deepest level of the individual's personality; for another, because it is the most appropriate if one is concerned with the interaction between the socio-economic structure and the character structure of the individual. However, the title of the book implies two issues that have to be solved; that is, the definition of alienation, and Brecht's theory and practice of alienation.

In the introductory chapter to his intensive study of alienation, R. Schacht writes:

> It is becomng increasingly common to hear life in the present age characterized in terms of "alienation." When reviewers of books, films, and theater state—as they often do—that a work deals with "alienation," they usually mean to convey to their readers that it deals with some aspect of "the plight of modern man," or that of some significant segment in modern society. Social commentators contend with growing frequency that "alienation" is one of the greatest problems confronting us today. It is seen in the generation gap, in the hippie phenomenon, in the antiwar movement, in the Black Culture and Black Power movement. We hear of "alienation" in critiques of the nature of work in modern industry and bureaucractic organizations, the quality of life in middle-class bourgeois society, the relation of government to the governed, and the neglect and despoilment of our environment. Reference is constantly made to it in connection with the growth of superficiality and impersonality in interpersonal relations, the compartmentalization of our lives, the stunting of personal development, the widespread existence of inhuman or neurotic personality traits, the absence of a sense of the meaningfulness of life.(1)

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1. Richard Schacht, **op. cit.,** p. 1.

Alienation, as a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien, makes man estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the centre of the world, as the creatorof his own acts, but his acts and their consequences become his masters whom he obeys or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He is experienced as objects are experienced, but at the same time, without being related to himself and to the world outside.

However, it would be pertinent before dealing with the problem of alienation, to start by defining the term and to trace it back to its linguistic origin, and then to give a survey of the history of the use of the term.

Alienation is derived from the Latin noun "alienatio" deriving from the verb "alienare" meaning to make something another's to take away, remove. The verb derives from the word "alienus" (belonging or pertaining to another). "Alienus" derives ultimately from "alius," meaning "other" as an adjective, or "another" as a noun. The older meaning in which alienation was used to denote an insane person; "aliene" in French, "alienado" in Spanish are older words for the psychotic. "Alienist" in English is used for the doctor who cares for the insane. In French or in English, the word is used to translate three German words: Veräusserung, Entäusserung and Entfremdung. The first of these usually has a juridical meaning, as does the equivalent French word; it merely describes the sale of property. The other two words do not have the same root; one refers to externalization (aussen = outside), the other to strangeness (fremd = strange). Entäusserung means externalization, the creation of a work which exists outside its creator. Externalization equals alienation when the work becomes or seems alien to its creator. Entfremdung does not have the legal-commercial understones of Entäusserung, and would not be used, for instance, to describe a transfer of property. The grammatical element "ation" usually serves to indicate a process of development, as do the elements "Ent.. ung" in German, and the terms which

they form with "alien" and "fremd" respectively, have the literal meaning of making or becoming "alien."(2)

Alienation, as an intellectual and philosophical concept, received its first—though half-expressed—treatment in Rousseau's social and political theories in which the idea takes a large part. In Book I, Chapter IV of **The Social Contract,** Rousseau expounded the word "alienation" denoting sale of property : "To alienate is to give or sell."(3) He maintained that such an act cannot be done gratuitously because man cannot renounce his liberty, which is the essence of the very quality of his manhood, irrevocably and unconditionally. However, there would be no compensation for anyone committing such an act. A slave, for instance, can have no claim against his master, who owns the very rights of the slave. But, since, according to Rousseau, the right of liberty is an essential human quality, renouncing it must be in the interest of man, not against his humanity. Such an act should be done consciously and voluntarily. Rousseau offers the example of the family as being the prototype of the political society. In the family, which is the most ancient and the only natural of all societies, the children are related to their father so long as they need him for their self-preservation. This bond, which Rousseau calls "natural," comes to an end as soon as the children cease to need the father for their subsistence, and when both children and father return to a state of independence. But if the relationship continues, it is no longer natural but "voluntary." Thus, the children, in the case of the family, willingly and consciously alienate their liberty in their own interest. By analogy, the same process is undergone in the political society in the transition from the "natural" to the "civil state". Man in the "state of nature" is governed by his own personal instincts, which direct his conduct. These personal instincts, Rousseau identifies as the "private" or "particular will." When society passes from the "natural" to the "civil state," there occurs a conflict between the "private will" of the individual and the "general will" of the society. The "Social Contract," which regulates and organizes the relationship between

2. Taken from R. Schacht, **op. cit.,** pp. 9-10.
3. J.J. Rousseau, **Political Writings** (London : Nelson, 1953, p. 35.

the individual and society, solves this problem by making these two incompatible ends meet. According to Rousseau's "Social Contract," the individual agrees to alienate all his rights to the community for the sake of the transition from the "state of nature" to the "civil society," which Rousseau considers a necessary stage in the history of mankind. In the "state of nature" man's contact with his fellow men is infrequent and inconsistent, and his conduct is, therefore, directed by mere instinct. In the "civil state" man is provided with the opportunity for moral self-development. It is, thus, a necessary stage in the full development of man. In it he learns how to discpiline his natural or instinctual desires in the interest of common needs and actions. Thus, the "civil state" provides man with reason and morality which he lacks in the "state of nature." because these, i.e. reason and morality, are products of "civil society." In short, man devoid of reason and morality in the "state of nature" is reduced to a beast; in the "civil state" man is liberated from the beastly condition and his humanity is restored to him.

Moreover, Rousseau maintains that the individuals, by freely alienating themselves, to the community, do not lose their liberty. Within the civil society, individuals become free in accordance with the general will, i.e. they become fully developed moral beings by becoming morally active in the community. The moral participation of all citizens is, according to Rousseau, the only moral justification of any government. The political action, in Rousseau's view, is a continuous struggle to surpass selfish impulses in the interest of the common good. Thus, alienation is an all-important and essential condition for the moral development of man. Man cannot possibly participate in the community except as a developed-alienated being. In their continuous moral participation, which proceeds form the free will of the acting agents, all participate in the formation of the "general will," which Rousseau considers the only legitimate source of political action.

By distinguishing between the "general will" and the "particular will," Rousseau determines the relationship between the individual responsibility and social authority. In the "civil society," when men enter

into frequent and consistent relationships with each other, a social conflict arises which threatens these very men's desire to live and associate peacefully together. The individual's constant desire to assert himself, i.e. his selfish impulse, is always opposed to the same desire of other individuals. Rousseau defines this as the "state of war," which he considers a constant and universal relation existing between men, independent of individuals, even if they are peaceful. This "state of war" is a threat to the "state of nature" in which man is guided by what Rousseau calls "self-respect," or the instinct that preserves him alive. This threat is only materialized when "self-respect" is transformed into "particular" or "private interest," taking the abstract form of egoism or selfish impulses which run counter to the general rules of conduct. "Particular interest" is the very outcome of the civil society. For man, in the first state of nature, has no particular interest because his connection with other men is infrequent and inconsistent, and nothing, therefore, can oppose him to other men. Due to the conditions of opposition which arise from and are produced in the civil state, "particular interest" arises. Man in the civil society, or the developed-alienated man, acquires the sense of particular interest as a result of the relationship into which he enters. Thus, men in the civil state are forced into the state of war, into alienation. This state of alienation is the very product of their activity, for Rousseau proclaims that: "It is the relationship between things, not men, that constitutes war."(4) Thus, men become the victims of the very relations that their activity had produced; they are dominated and guided by their particular interests, alienated, powerless against those relations and their effects. This state of alienation is the basis of the "Social Contract."

According to Rousseau, the "Social Contract" provides the solution to the fundamental problem: "To find a form of association which defends and protects the person and property of each member with the whole force of community, and where each, while joining with all the rest, still obeys no one but himself, and remains as free as before."(5)

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4. J.J. Rousseau, **op. cit.,** p. 38,
5. Ibid,

Although Rousseau's design was to protect the freedom of the individual, he recognized that the state of pure freedom might compel individuals to commit acts contrary to society, thus, jeopardizing the very existence of society. He had to find the solution to this contradiction; how to oblige men to act against their will freely and willingly and to continue as free moral agents in participating in the formation of the general will. The only solution to this state of alienation, in Rousseau's view, is the "total alienation" of each member with all his rights to the community as a whole. In such case the condition will be equal for all and, consequently, there will be complete identification between the private and the general will because no one will have a private will to assert against that of the general. Furthermore, Rousseau maintains that the individual by giving himself to the community gives himself to no one; thus, what he loses equals what he gains. For in the state of "total alienation," the individual and the community are in perfect union. Thus, the individual consciously and voluntarily alienates himself totally to the community, which for Rousseau, is one of the most essential conditions for the "social compact." This collective and cooperate body forming the body politic, when active, is known as the "sovereign." The people, instead of giving themselves to a king, who is the sovereign in the case of a monarchy, give themselves to the community, thus, forming the republic in which the individual members of the state form the sovereign.

However, to assume that the individual gives up everything and gets nothing in return, which might be infered from "total alienation," would be wrong. For alienation, according to Rousseau's definition, signifies exchange. In the civil state man gains what he could never have achieved in the first state of nature. Although he loses his natural liberty, "...his faculties are exercised and developed, his ideas are broadened, his sentiments ennobled, and his whole soul elevated..."(6) In other words, he gains civil liberty which is limited by the general will. He exchanges his natural, impulsive liberty for this moral liberty, which "...makes him

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6. J. J. Rousseau, **op. cit.**, p. 44.

truly master of himself."(7) Thus, for Rousseau, a state of conscious and voluntary alienation is inevitable in man's development from the animal to the human state.

Due to Rousseau's fundamentally idealistic world view, he came to the ultimate conclusion that a state of alienation, however conscious and voluntary, is an essential concomitant of man's social existence and is, therefore, uneliminable. Although Rousseau did not speak of alienation as a spiritual condition and had full consideration for the social conditions as a force behind man's self-alienation, he laid much stress on man's desire to commit acts contrary to the welfare of the community, as being the product of sheer instinct. Thus, he placed man in opposition to society, relying on his assumption that man's behaviour is motivated by instinctual desires.

The case, as stated by Rousseau, results in the neglect of the objective causes of alienation, i.e. the social conditions which give rise to it. Rousseau's subjective approach to alienation, being based on the assupmtion that the community consists of a group of individuals, has led him to his final conclusion. Rousseau's idea of society as consisting of a group of individuals, would inevitably result in giving to the subjective factor a much higher priority over the objective factor in the interpretation of the social phenomena. The objective factor, however, necessitates a change in the outlook towards society, so that instead of regarding it as a group of individuals, it is seen as being larger than the number of a group of individuals because society, being an organic whole, is bigger than the sum of its parts. Such an outlook considers social development dependent upon certain social forces and not on individuals, hence the vital importance of the objective factor.

Rousseau's idea of man as being basically anti-social, recognizes the contradiction between man and society as an essential issue. But, if the issue is considered on more objective grounds, i.e. on the assumption that society consists of social forces rather than of a number of individuals,

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7. J.J. Rousseau, **op. cit.,** p. 44.

the contradiction implied here would be between the different social forces involved. Thus, the objective causes which produce this contradiction would be identified, hence the means of their elimination.

In the last century, the concept of alienation was more elaborately explored by major philosophers of the period, and their interpretation is the starting point for all discussions on alienation in present-day philosophy, sociology and psychology. It was Hegel who first elevated the term to a position of philosophical importance. In his first book **Phenomenology of the Spirit** (1807),(8) one whole chapter, over a hundred pages in length, is entitled "Spirit alienated from itself. Culture." Hegel here discusses the problem in full detail. This chapter is followed by another one : "Spirit certain of itself. Morality." In his greatest work, Hegel traces the development of mind or spirit (Geist), asserting that the human mind can attain to absolute knowledge. He analyses the development of human consciousness, from its immediate perception of the here and now to the stage of self-consciousness, or the understanding that allows man to analyse the world and order his own actions accordingly. Following this is the stage of reason itself, understanding of the real, after which the spirit, by means of religion and art, attains to absolute knowledge, the level at which man recognizes in the world the stages of his own reason. These stages Hegel calls "alienations," in so far as they are creations of the human mind, yet thought of as independent and superior to the human mind.

It is a basic idea of Hegel's philosophy that whatever is, is in the last analysis the Absolute Idea (Absolute Spirit, Absolute Mind, or, in popular language, God), and that the Absolute Idea (Weltgeist) is neither a set of fixed things, nor a sum of static properties, but a dynamic self, engaged in a circular process of alienation and de-alienation. Nature is but a self-alienated form of the Absolute Mind, and the whole of human history is the constant growth of man's knowledge of the Absolute.

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8. G.W.F. Hegel, **Phenomenology of Mind,** trans. J.B. Baillie (New York : Macmillan, 1949).

However, this is not an event in time, but a timeless fact; it means that the starting point of world history is the already alienated mind, and that all of history is reduced to the process of de-alienation. In other words, human history, according to Hegel, is the last stage of the "Becoming of the Spirit"; it has been projected into nature, and then has been alienated from it in order to return to itself in a unity in which subject and object are fused. Alienation will be overcome only with the end of history and the return of the Spirit to itself in absolute knowledge. This process is only reached in infinity.

According to Hegel's concept of alienation, it is an essential characteristic of the finite mind (man) to produce things, to express himself in objects, to objectify himself in physical things, social institutions and cultural products, and every objectification is, of necessity, alienation because the produced objects become alien to the producer. Alienation, in this sense, can be overcome only in the sense of being adequately known. There is also another sense in which man can be regarded as alienated in Hegel's philosophical system; it is the vocation of man as man to serve as the organ of the self-knowledge of the Absolute, and to the extent to which he does not perform this function, he does not fulfil his human essence, and thus to that extent he is merely a self-alienated man.

Although Hegel referred to man as a social being and to his activities as social products, he dealth with these activities on a purely abstract and mental basis. He disregarded the social relations between individuals which are the occasion of interaction between the individual and the environment on the one hand, and between the individual and other individuals on the other, without which man's activity remains only half-explained. In consciously excluding some of the basic activities, Hegel takes no consideration of the social relations, hence the class concept has no place in his philosophical system.

Hegel applied the dialectical method to the process of thought, that is, in pure abstract terms. In order to conceive an object as it is (not

as we assume it to be), Hegel maintained, the object has to be alienated (entfremdet). This alienation is effected by analysing and separating the object into its individual parts, i.e. by disrupting the initial unity of the object. This act, Hegel calls the annulling of the form in which an object is represented to us as something known. To annul or "aufheben" (literally to raise up) has two opposed meanings in German: (1) It can mean "to abolish," "to cancel," "to do away with"; (2) It can also mean "to preserve." Hegel uses the word in its double negative and positive meaning to describe the negative-positive action by which a higher logical category or form of Nature or Spirit, in surpassing a lower, both "annuls" it and "preserves" or "incorporates" its turth. In this dialectical process, what is assumed to be known or familiar has been alienated from the original idea of it; thus, a first "negation" has been made. However, the process remains incomplete; for the true recognition of an object is only reached when this "negation" is itself negated, or the "negation of negation."

Alienation, as a process by which man is turned into a stranger in the world his activity has created, is the theme of Ludwig Feuerbach's **Essence of Christianity** (1838).(9) Feuerbach accepts Hegel's view that man can be alienated from himself, but he rejects both the view that nature is a self-alienated form of the Absolute Mind and the view that man is the Absolute Mind in the process of de-alienation. Feuerbach makes use of the notion of alienation in his study of Christianity; he sets out to show that the essence of religion is the essence of man projected outside himself and reified or personified. The powers and capacities attributed to the gods are, according to Feuerbach, man's own powers and capacities, and the divine law is nothing but the law of man's own nature. Feuerbach argues that man is not a self-alienated God as Hegel contends. On the contrary, God is a self-alienated man; he is merely man's essence absolutized and estranged from man. Moreover, man is not alienated from himself when he refuses to recognize nature as a self-alienated form of God; man is alienated from himself when he creates

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9. Ludwig Feuerbach, **Essence of Christianity,** trans. Marian Evans (London: Kegan Paul, 1938).

and puts above himself an imagined alien, higher being and bows before him. Feuerbach considers religion simply as man's essential nature broken and obliterated, and he maintains that religion and philosophy should be materialized and reduced to anthropology, or man's nature He writes: "My doctrine in belief is as follows : Theology is anthropology, i.e., that which reveals itself in the object of religion...—is nothing other than the essence of man. In other words, the God of man is nothing other than the divinized essence of man."(10)

Feuerbach maintains that when man feels alienated in a hostile world, he turns to another, more remote and less hostile world which he hopes will compensate for his suffering. This state of double alienation, according to Feuerbach, removes man from himself and from nature. Thus, in religion man alienates himself from himself, worships his own self-created image. Man's ideas about himself are turned upside down by this alienation. He has to be, therefore, dragged back from this enchantment and its spell must be broken and man brought home to himself. For this to happen, man must recognize himself as a subject and not as an object. Hence, "...what was formerly contemplated and worshipped as God, is now perceived to be something **human**... All the attributes of the divine are, therefore, attributes of the human nature."(11) According to Feuerbach's idea of religious alienation, God becomes an ideal substitute for the real world, a wish-fulfilling symbol which man worships because he finds that easier and more satisfying than improving the real world. Feuerbach, therefore, maintains that : "And we need only ...invert religious relations-regard that as an end which religion supposed to be a means-exalt that into the primary which in religion is subordinate... at once we have destroyed the illusion, and the unclouded light of truth streams in upon us."(12)

The fundamental approach in the philosophical arguments of Rousseau, Hegel and Feuerbach is the idealistic interpretation of the all-

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10. L. Feuerbach, **op. cit.,** p. 27.
11. **Ibid.,** p. 32.
12. **Ibid.,** p. 231.

pervading feature of alienation as justification for considering it a supra-historical characteristic of human existence. Alienation, according to them, is presented as a natural and not a social phenomenon, as a universal feature of man's existence. In this way, these philosophers fail to do more than describe various forms of alienation without pinpointing their true social causes. Hence, this view lacks a concrete critical spirit. It does no more than cultivate some kind of rebellion which disregards any sort of organized action to remove alienation, mainly because it ignores the class principle in investigating such a complex social problem as alienation. Alienation to them is regarded not as a result of contradiction within class society, but as something eternal which is intrinsic to any society whatsoever.

It was Karl Marx who filled the gap in all the precedent concepts of alienation. The seed of all Marx's thought is the idea of alienation which he took from Hegel and Feuerbach. It was from Hegel's philosophy that Marx derived the concept of alienation. Marx, on the contrary, saw the causes of alienation to be in the concrete socio-economic conditions in which man acted. By alienation he understood an objective process of the transformation of man's activity and its results into a form that would be man's power and would dominate him, a process shaped by the predominance of private property and the division of labour in advanced capitalist societies. This means that Marx succeeded in picking out the link between alienation and the socio-economic foundations of society.

In his **Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,**(13) Marx criticized Hegel's **Phenomenology** and his idealistic explanatin of history, arguing that such speculative history ignored real men and real conditions. Following the structure of political economy, Marx considered man's labour or "man's self-confirming essence," the basis of history and human society and not the manifestation of a supra-historical

13. K. Marx, **Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844** (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977).

force. Hegel's "Spirit's" activity, inverted by Marx, became man's activity through his real, concrete labour situated in specific historical periods and closely related to the prevailing mode of production. Marx summed up his attitude to Hegel as follows:

> The great thing in Hegel's **Phenomenology** and its final result —the dialectic of negativity as the moving and productive principle—is simply that Hegel grasps the self-development of man as a process, objectification as the loss of the object, as alienation and transcendance of this alienation... he therefore grasps the nature of labour, and conceives objective man... as the result of his own labour... (man's) affirmation of himself as a real species-being (i.e. as a human being) is only possible in so far as he really brings forth all his species-powers... which can only be done at first in the form of alienation.(14)

Although both Hegel and Marx believed that man could only become the species-being that he was by first treating his "species-powers" as objects separate from himself, in Marx's opinion—and this is the crucial difference between the two philosophers—Hegel conceived labour as the activity of pure spirit. Marx's objection to Hegel is that, in his explanation of the course of social and cultural change, he took account of only some of man's activities to the neglect of others. He dealt with one aspect of development of human activity and its product history, and inflated it to look like the whole. Whereas Marx believed that Hegel's point of view must be understood not as abstract speculative history, Hegel's concept of alienation—obscure and ambiguous as it was—was none the less a reflection of alienation in real life, i.e. in the economic structure of society. Hegel's metaphysical concepts were, thus, transformed into material categories by Marx.

Marx, as he indicated in his "Theses on Feuerbach," started from the position Feuerbach had not reached, i.e. social criticism. It Feuer-

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14. K. Marx, **The Essential Writings of Karl Marx,** ed. D. Cante (London: Collins, 1967), pp. 202-203.

bach was right in pointing out that the religious world is illusory, a compensation for the defects in the real world, he surely did not continue the quest of the origin of the illusion. The negative aspect of Feuerbach's philosophy was argued by Marx and Engels:

> ...because he still remains in the realm of theory and conceives of men not in their given social connection, not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are, he never arrives at really existing active men, but stops at the abstraction "man," and gets no further than recognizing "the true, individual, corporeal, man" emotionally, i.e. he knows no other "human relationships" of man to man" than love and friendship, and even then idealized.(15)

Although Feuerbach takes account of the relations between men, these are of an emotional and spiritual rather than of a social and cultural nature. Marx's "Fourth Thesis on Feuerbach" illustrates his dissatisfaction with Feuerbach's idealism and his neglect for the class concept and the ensuing class conflict:

> Feuerbach starts from the fact of religious self-alienation, the duplication of the world into a religious-imaginary world into its secular basis. He overlooks the fact that after completing this work the chief thing still remains to be done. For the fact that the secular foundation lifts itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is only to be explained by the self-cleavage and self-contradictoriness of this secular basis. The latter must itself, therefore, once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be theoretically criticized and radically changed in practice.(16)

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15. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," Frederick Engels, **Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy** (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), pp. 62-63.
16. K. Marx, and F. Engels, **The German Ideology** (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), p. 64.

Marx's objection to Feuerbach's thesis is that Feuerbach did not apply his criticism to the field of economics. Criticism, according to Marx, must turn to a deeper alienation, namely, that of politics:

> The immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, is to unmask human self-alienation in its unholy (secular) form now that it has been unmasked in its holy (sacred) form. Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of politics.(17)

The problem of alienation dominated all Marx's writings, but no longer as a philosophical issue in the sense of a dispute about the essence of man. Alienation was examined by Marx as a social phenomenon. He argued about the circumstances in which men project their own powers, their own values, upon hypothetical superhuman beings. He discussed the social causes of this phenomenon. In this sense Marx described religion. He agreed with Feuerbach's criticism of religious alienation, but he stressed that the religious alienation of man was only one among many forms of man's self-alienation. Man not only alienates a part of himself in the form of God, he also alienates products of his spiritual activity in the form of philosophy, art, morals; he alienates products of his social activity in the form of state, law, social institutions. He not only alienates his own products from himself, however, he also alienates himself from the very activity through which these products are produced, from the nature in which he lives and from other men. But all these forms of alienation are in the last analysis one: they are only forms of the alienation of man from his human essence. The self-alienated man is a man who really is not a man, a man who does not realize his historically created human possibilities. A non-alienated man, on the contrary, would be a man who really is a man, a man who fulfills himself as a free, creative being.

In his analysis of the economic structure of capitalism, Marx des-

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17. K. Marx, **The Essential Writings of Karl Marx, ed. cit.,** p. 152.

cribed wealth in the form of capital as another mode of alienation, the rule of capital as the domination of living men by dead matter. In this sense, Marx identified four main forms of alienation : man's alienation from nature, from himself, from his "species-being" and from other men. According to Marx, the essence of self-alienation is that man at the same time alienates something from himself. This is the essence of Marx's thought if we analyse his well-known chapter : "Alienated Labour" in **Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,** where he speaks about the four aspects of alienation. He begins with the alienation of the results of man's labour, the alienation of objects produced by man. The realisation of labour is its objectification, and this objectification is, for the labourer, at the same time the loss of the object or alienation. The worker is related to the product of his labour as to an alien object. Products of his hands constitute a separate world of objects which is alien to him and which dominates and enslaves him. According to Marx, the alienation of the results of man's productive activity is rooted in the alienation of production itself. Man alienates the products of his labour because he alienates his labour activity, and his own activity becomes for him an alien activity, an activity in which he does not affirm but denies himself. From this characteristic of alienated labour, Marx deduces a third : by alienating his own activity and himself from himself, man in fact alienates his essence from himself, and himself from his essence. Man is in essence a creative, practical being, and when he alienates his creative activity from himself, he alienates his human essence from himself.

Finally, as an immediate consequence of the alienation of man from himself, there is the alienation of man from other men. Thus, the alienation of man from himself manifests itself as the alienation of man from man. As the worker alienates the products of his labour, his own activity and his genuine essence from himself, so he alienates another man from himself. The producer himself produces the power of those who do not produce but own the means of production. Marx, thus, differentiated four characteristics in the phenomenon of alienation. The first and the fourth of them (the alienation of products and the alienation

of man from man), he regarded as consequences and forms of expression of the second and the third (the alienation of production and the alienation of man's essence), where the essence of the phenomenon (the alienation of man from himself) is immediately seen.

Alienated labour, according to Marx, is the major characteristic of the modern capitalist society. Under capitalism work is an oppressive necessity ; man feels free only outside work, in his leisure time or with his family. Man feels free only as an individual and is thus alienated as a "species-being," for, unlike the animals, man, through his activity, produces not merely for himself but for the whole of nature. But alienated labour turns the product of labour from an activity of the species into the activity of the individual. Capitalism considers the worker as an individual possessing a commodity for sale, labour, which is then purchased by another and his activity is no longer his activity. Labour is forced, and the labourer does not form himself as a personality. In his labour the worker does not develop his creative ability but only exhausts himself. For him labour is not an inner need; it is only a means for satisfying other needs. Under capitalism the worker does not feel himself a man in the procses of labour; he is only a mechanism or a living machine. It is only when not working but performing his elementary functions in eating, drinking and sexual relations, that he feels himself a free individual, his own master.

Capitalism alienates man essentially from his own activity, from the product of his labour, thus, turning labour's product into an alien object; the more he works the more the worker finds himself dominated by the world of objects which his own labour has created. Thus, "The worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to himself but to the object. The greater his activity... the less he possesses. What is embodied in the product of his labour is no longer his own. The greater the product is... the more he is diminished."(18) Man's "self-confirming essence," his labour turns increasingly against him under

18. K. Marx, **Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ed. cit.,** p. 69.

capitalism and alienates him from productive activity; his work becomes a forced activity, an external thing denying rather than fulfilling him, inducing misery and despair. Hence, "the more refined his product the more crude and misshapen the worker; the more the work manifests intelligence the more the worker declines in intelligence and becomes a slave of nature."(19)

The worker, alienated from his product, is at the same time alienated from himself. His labour becomes no longer his own, and the fact that it becomes the property of another reflects an expropriation of the very essence of man. Labour in its true form is a medium for man's true self-fulfillment, for the full development of his potentialities. However, under capitalism the worker:

> ...does not affirm but contradicts his essence. Instead of developing his free physical and mental energies, he mortifies his body and ruins his mind. He, therefore, first feels he is with himself when he is free from work and apart from himself when he is at work. He is at home when he does not work and not at home when he does. His working is, therefore, not done willingly but under compulsion. It is forced labour. It is, therefore, not the satisfaction of need but only a means for the satisfaction of wants outside of it.(20)

Consequently, "Man feels himself acting freely only in his animal functions like eating, drinking and begetting ...whereas in his human functions he is nothing but an animal."(21) This process of alienation affects all strata of society. Thus, under capitalism the worker, the expropriated producer, and the capitalist who buys his labour express the same human alienation. But the possessing class is satisfied with its situation because it feels itself well established in it, and recognizes this self-alienation as its own power, having the appearance of a human

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19. K. Marx, **op cit.**, p. 71.
20. **Ibid.,** p. 73.
21. **Ibid.,** p. 72.

existence. The dispossessed class feels itself crushed by this self-alienation, sees in it its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman situation.(22) Under the capitalist mode of production, the most alienated class, by virtue of its economic function, is the proletariat. But the proletariat can exist as a class only through the private ownership of the means of production, the very basis of alienated labour. Therefore, Marx argues that the emancipation of the worker from his alienated condition includes the emancipation of all humanity. Within the framework of alienation, therefore, the property owners are the conservatives and the proletarians the progressive party.

It is important to grasp the distinction Marx draws between objectification and alienation. Although he praises Hegel for having grasped the self-alienation of man as a process of alienation and de-alienation, he criticizes him for having identified objectificaion with alienation, and the suppression of alienation with the abolition of objectification. Marx refuses to admit that all externalization is alienation, or in other words, that alienation is a metaphysical process. Objectification, according to him, is the process through which man externalizes himself in nature and society, for example, by producing things such as tools, i.e. man creates himself in the course of the centuries as he discovers more and more effective means of production. But by creating himself, he also lost himself. Hence, according to Marx, objectification is nothing but man's assertion of his personal "I," and his creation of human relations and human solidarity. But reification means the negation of man by the object, his de-personalization and divorce from other people. The object is transformed from one that is human and pertains to the concept of man into one that is non-human and stands opposed and even replaces him. Even the social essence of man in its object incarnation—the wealth of culture—operates, not as something from beyond, as a "thing." From a relation it turns more and more into a thing, but into a thing that contains within itself, and has swallowed up a social relation, a thing that

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22. K. Marx, **Marx in His Own Words**, ed. Ernst Fischer and Anna Bostock (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 132.

possesses a fictitious life and an independence that enters into a relation with itself. Thus, alienation is given concrete shape by reification. Marx and Engels point out the class nature of reification Reification, according to them, bears the stamp of class. The dominance of the capitalist over the worker they regard merely as "the dominance of the conditions of labour over the worker himself—the conditions which are given quasi-independence by the worker... is the dominance of the thing over man, dead labour over living one, the product over the producer."(23) This class nature of reification brings out more markedly the class nature of alienation.

Alienation, thus, occurs only when man, having externalized himself in nature and society, finds his activity operating on him as an external, alien and oppressive power. For Marx, objectification is unavoidable if man is to humanize and transform nature into an expression of himself, a necessary process for the growth of a truly humane and social man. As such, objectification is not identical with alienation. Objectification, within capitalist society only, implies alienation; for capitalism constitutes the total alienation of human labour as capital dominates it completely. Hegel, by making objectification and alienation identical terms, concluded that man must remain forever trapped in alienation as his essential and ultimately tragic condition. Marx, however, by introducing the link between alienation and socio-economic structure, grasped the historical character of alienation and maintained that the abolition of its causes, private property within capitalism, are necessary steps toward man's liberation from alienation.

Furthermore, Marx's analysis of labour under capitalism goes much deeper than the socio-economic structure of society to the actual human content. His analysis of the process of reification manifests how capitalist society makes all personal relations between men take the form of objective relations betwen things. Within the capitalist society, "indivi-

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23. K. Marx, **Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ed. cit.,** p. 68.

duals themselves are reified, reduced to the position of things, and perform only material roles and functions. This means that there appear, not only social relations between things, but, at the same time, material relations between things."(24) The capitalist system relates men to each other through the commodities they exchange. The social status of individuals, their standard of living, the satisfaction of their needs are all determined by the value of their commodities. The capacities and human needs of the individuals have no part in the evaluation. Individuals participate in their social relations as owners of commodities only, and social relations of individuals are turned into relations between things. This state arises from the specific mode of labour in commodity production under capitalism and division of labour.

Yet, Marx states further that even the institution of private property "apears as the product, result and inevitable consequence of the alienated mode of labour, and derives from the mechanism of the social mode of production."(25) Thus, the alienation of labour leads to the division of labour, which is a major characteristic of all forms of class society. According to the Marxian dialectic, the negativity of capitalist society lies in its alienation of labour; the negation of this negativity will come with the abolition of alienated labour. In order to abolish alienation in the process of labour the content and character of labour must be changed, making it a self-assertion of personality. Since alienation has taken its most widespread universal form in the institution of private property, the solution comes with the abolition of private property. Yet, Marx considers the abolition of private property as a means for the abolition of alienated labour, and not as an end in itself. The socialization of the means of production is only the beginning of a new social order, depending on what man does with the socialized means of production. They should be utilized for the development and preser-

24. K. Marx, **Marx in His Own Words, ed. cit.,** p. 150.
25. K. Marx, **Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ed. cit.,** p. 77,

vation of the free individual within a free society, liberated from all forms of alienation.

The concept of alienation recurs and finds full expression in Existentialist philosophy. Existentialism, as a philosophical movement, developed in a time of swift change to express the individual's sense of fragmentation, loss and destruction by the exigencies of modern life. This was reflected in the emphasis upon the alienation of man from an absurd world and his estrangement from society, his recognition of the world as meaningless, his burden of anxieties and his consequent need to distinguish between the authentic and the inauthentic self, his obsession with his imminent death on one hand, and his passion to live on the other. Man's alienation from himself is the very problem with which Existentialist philosophy and Existentialist literature are concerned : to examine situations in which man is estranged from himself because he is trapped by a society that cannot fulfil his deepest needs. Existentialism, according to Sartre, becomes a philosophy of resistance and liberation; it is an attempt to set free man's authentic self from the cage-life existence of his inauthentic self. According to Sartre, human existence implies nothingness, i.e. it contains within itself elements of change that deny man's very being. The eternal conflict is between the two states, that of being and that of nothingness, or between being and becoming. "Being in itself" (être en soi) strives to become "being for itself" (être pour soi); yet when this stage is reached, the individual is alienated from his essence. Furthermore, this becoming-alienated as it is—is inevitable. According to Sartre, the only form in which the two states are unified is in the eternalized moment of artistic creativity : "The yearning for permanence usually as a hope of eternity, as the desire to reach a concrete existence in 'flesh and blood' that would also be essence, achieving at last in a work of art this perfect coincidence of form and content."(26) This form which is content, this expression of an ideal state of the world, is what Sartre defines as beauty.

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26. Jean-Paul Sartre, **Being and Northingness,** trans. Hazel Barnes (London : Methuen, 1956), pp. 194-195.

The conception of alienation is found in Sartre's two principal philosophical works: **Being and Nothingness** and **Critique of Dialectical** Reason. In the first one the concept is used with the individual's experience of himself as an object through the mediation of another individual: the look of the other. Sartre's classical example is that of being surprised by another while peeking through a keyhole. In "the act of being looked-at" by what "I" recognize to be another being with the character of a subject (another "I"), "I" experience what Sartre terms "the alienation of myself": "In the shock that seizes me when I apprehend the other's look, I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities, which are now associated with objects of the world, far from me in the midst of the world."(27) Furthermore, Sartre maintains that:

> I am not merely an object, a thing among other things. Rather my nature is to be conceived in terms of freedom. Thus, it is my possibilities, and not simply my determinate characteristics, which are definite of my existence. The "Other," however, looking at me, sees only my determinate characteristics. To him, while he is observing in this way, I appear as an object, rather than a free subject. Of course, I am still my possibilities... But at the same time, the look alienates them from me... For my presence, insofar as it is a present grasped by another as my present has an outside.(28)

And it is only this objective outside that he sees. My recognition of the subject-character of the "Other," thus, involves the experience of myself as I appear to him. It is as an object that I appear to him, when he looks at me; and so it is as an object that I now experience myself. The object-self which I experience, however, is a self which seems alien to me; for it is radically different from the selfhood I experience when I consider myself simply as subject, as I do when I am confronted merely with a variety of objects.

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27. Jean-Paul Sartre, **op. cit.,** pp. 285-412.
28. Jean-Paul Sartre, **Critique of Dialectical Reason** (London: Metheun, 1976), p. 285.

My natural tendency, according to Sartre, is to be repulsed by this "alien Me," and to try to tear myself away from the relation to the "Other" which reveals it to me, in an attempt to avoid acknowledging it. Sartre writes :

> But as I choose myself as a tearing away from the other, I assume and recognize as mine, this alienation Me... For in my protest that Me is not the real Me, I am acknowledging that at least to a certain extent it is me. And try, though I may, I cannot rid myself of this "alien Me" which I discover in the Look of the Other. Even when the Other is no longer present, I cannot escape this "dimension of being-alienated."(29)

In the second book, **Critique of Dialectical Reason,** Sartre's conception of alienation is influenced to a certain extent by Marxism and not by Existentialism as in the first book. He links one's identity with the process of self-objectificaion, precisely as Marx had done. In objectifying oneself, the individual is said to be producing his life. Sartre agrees with Marx that "this perpetual production of oneself by work and praxis is our peculiar structure."(30) He maintains further that it may be that one's objectification "takes on a reality which the agent himself may not know,"(31) and thus becomes something alien to him. Here, Sartre differs with Marx because for Marx alienation is associated with reification and not with objectification. Thus, Sartre does not accept Marx's suggestion in terms of the presence of certain eliminable socio-economic conditions. Rather he considers it to be an inevitable concomitant of objectification in a world in which there are other men.(32)

The concept of alienation is the major qualifying feature of Brecht's works, though it is not explicitly mentioned. Being a central or major concept, it is latent because it is fertile, deep and obscure. Hence, it

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29. Jean-Paul Sartre, **Critique of Dialectical Reason, ed. cit.,** p. 285.
30. **Ibid.,** p. 151.
31. **Ibid.,** p. 151.
32. **Ibid.,** pp. 162-163.

may not be presented or exposed in a direct manner, but through the other related ideas which are generated by and revolve round the central concept. Consequently, in approaching Brecht's works, the logical thing would be to start from the centre and then proceed outwards toward the other issues which are the product of the central idea. However, it is more common to concentrate on the revolving ideas because these are surface—deep and less obscure to detect than the central concept. Yet this false intelligibility is intriguing because it tends to conceal the real issue if one concentrates on it. For, in order to discover the author's system of thought, the central concept is indispensable.

Alienation, according to Brecht, is the main distinctive characteristic of the capitalist society. It is worth noting that Brecht's references to this concept and the very fact that he uses it when analysing various socio-political phenomena are without doubt the result of the Marxian influence. Assuming that the category alienation is the most exact for characterization of the inner essence of the individual and the society, Brecht proceeds to choose it as a technique and as a content in his theatre. Brecht observes with bitter irony that modern capitalist society has succeeded in creating this mode of existence : alienation. His critical approach to modern bourgeois society enabled him to demonstrate how that society is dominated by an illogicality, according to which self-deception is made to appear like truth, abnormality as norm and sickness as health. That is why he proceeds to unmask the reality of the mechanism of the capitalist system through the concept of alienation.

The evolution of Brecht's theatre should be interpreted against the background of alienation as a concept and the problem of consciousness. For Brecht, self-consciousness on the abstract level is not sufficient for removal of alienation. As alienation, as a mode of experience, is conditioned by social and economic factors, the removal of these is the major essential step towards the creation of a humanized, de-alienated society. For alienation to Brecht is synonymous with dehumanization. In his plays and articles, Brecht seeks to find the remedy for man's self-alienation, his loss of his essential self and his transformation into a thing.

Brecht's literary output together with his theoretical writings constitute a movement against dehumanization and mechanization of the individual which is immanent in the growth of Western capitalism and its mode of production. He does that through a genuine representation of the dilemma of man within contemporary capitalist class society and the various forms of exploitation, which, in the last analysis, reduce man to a weak, lifeless, powerless, oppressed, alienated being.

Brecht's theory of the theatre which he terms as "Verfremdung," is used by him only as a means through which he conveys the various forms of alienation (Entfremdung) as a concept. The pivotal idea in Brecht's theatre is the problem of alienation and its solution, the removal of the causes of alienation. Brecht's interpretation of alienation is introduced within a certain framework which implies a new vision of change. Here, we claim that this vision is futuristic, i.e. a transcendence of the past. This is why we do not agree with those critics who concentrate only on Brecht's theory of alienation as a technique, and thus confine themselves within the various practical applications of his technique.(33) This kind of interpretation is due to a misunderstanding of the revolutinoary content of Brecht's theatre. For a true and comprehensive assessment of the value of Brecht's theatre and its impact on other dramatists, one should concentrate on the central concept which poses the main problem for the author. The rest of the problems and their solutions should be dealt with as side-issues, representing a ramification of the central problem and revolving round it. This major problem is alienation. The content of the problem is related to consciousness because it implies a progressive, futuristic vision for social change. Thus,

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33. This critical approach is adopted by almost all Western critics. The best known representatives of this approach in the West are : John Willett in **The Theatre of Bertold Brecht, ed. cit.;** Martin Esslin in **A Choice of Evils** (London : Heinemann, 1977); Frederick Ewen in **Bertold Brecht, His Life, His Art and His Time** (London : Calder and Boyars, 1970); Raymond Williams in **Drama in Performance** (London : Penguin, 1972), pp. 146-152; and **Drama from Ibsen to Brecht** (London : Penguin, 1976), pp. 316-332.

to discard the content and to concentrate on the technique is connected with a certain purpose, that is, emptying the form of its content and stresing the form which results in camouflaging consciousness of social change for the sake of preserving the status quo.

Although Brecht's "Verfremdung" derives from Hegel's "Enfremdung," it differs qualitatively. The fact that he uses a term with a different prefix denotes the difference. This difference derives from another source, namely, from Marx. Brecht rejects Hegel's philosophical system due to its idealist, conservative interpretation of the problem of alienation. However, he retains the Hegelian dialectic due to its critical and evolutinoary nature, after investing it with a Marxian interpretation of the political and socio-economic causes of alienation. From Hegel, Brecht derived the technique of his dialectic. His "Verfremdung" is not alienation in the Hegelian sense; it is not simply negation, but implies also the second step in the dialectic, i.e. the negation of negation. So, Brecht combines the two steps into one; the first step of alienation, namely, to present what is familiar as unfamiliar. However, his aim is not just to render the phenomena unfamiliar but to present them through a new vision leading to the change of the existing reality. He summed up the process in one word "Verfremdung" which can denote "alienation of alienation" (Verfremdung der Entfremdung).(34) The first step of alienation which is negation or to make strange, implies the second step, alienation of alienation, which is positive because it implies consciousness of the causes of alienation together with the new vision of change. If

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34. The first critic to call attention to this point was the German scholar Reinhold Grimm in his essay "Alienation: Contribution to the Nature and Origin of a Concept" (Verfremdung : Beiträge zu Wesen and Ursprung eines Begriffs), **Revue de la Litérature Comparé,** Vol. 35, 1961. Grimm explains Brecht's technique of alienation in the light of negation, according to which the establishment of distance represents the first negation and the removal of distance the second negation or the negation of negation. Ronald Gray picks up this idea and repeats it almost unchanged in **Brecht the Dramatist** (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 75-76.

Brecht had presented the two steps separately there would have been the risk that the spectator might regard the presentation of events in an unfamiliar way as the only aim. Therefore, Brecht pushed one step into another and used the term "Verfremdung" to sum up the whole process, thus giving the audience the basis for action. By reducing the two steps into one, Brecht differs qualitatively from Hegel's dialectic. The new vision which he puts forward through the technique is Marxian in the broad sense of the word, epitomized in Marx's statement: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."(35) This is a call for a revolution in which man's de-alienation is materialized. Like Marx, Brecht is concerned with the socio-economic implications of the problem of alienation and its solution.

To establish a unity between "alienation" (Entfremdung, i.e. a state of being) as a theme, and "alienation" (Verfremdung, i.e. making strange) as a technique, Brecht was continually concerned with finding certain theatrical techniques that would link his analysis of the state of man's being under capitalism with his theatrical praxis, and to impel the audience to act on the realities revealed through analysis. Although not all the alienation effects are political, their underlying intention is. That is, Brecht's perception of alienation and his invention of alienation effects are closely and inextricably tied up together. Yet, a distinction between both could be made in order to clarify Brecht's specific theory and praxis of the techniques of alienation.

Like all Brecht's views on the theatre, the concept of alienation has undergone stages of development. In 1938 he wrote:

> ...one of those elements that are peculiar to the epic theatre, the so-called A-effect (alienation effect). What is involved here is, briefly, a technique of taking the human social incidents to be portrayed and labelling them as something striking, something that calls for explanation, is not to be taken for

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35. K. Marx, "Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach," **op. cit.** p. 65.

> granted, not just natural. The object of this 'effect' is to allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view.(36)

Ten years later Brecht established, in "The Short Organum for the Theatre," a modification of the term :

> A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar... For it seems impossible to alter what has long not been altered. We are always coming on things which are too obvious for us to bother to understand them. What men experience among themselves they think of as 'the' human experience... Here is the outlook, disconcerting but fruitful, which the theatre must provoke with its representations of human social life. It must amaze its public, and this can be achieved by a technique of alienating the familiar(37)

Brecht believes that the theatre should surprise the audience, and that the alienation technique should present events and processes as socially controllable with the intention of removing the stamp of trust which is a hindrance to the concept. Yet Brecht never considered the method of alienation to be a personal invention, and he held that scientists also employ it in order to deduce concepts from their studies and observations of natural phenomena.(38) In this way, the self-evident and natural is

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36. Brecht, **Brecht on Theatre,** trans. John Willett (London : Eyre Methuen, 1978), p. 125.
37. Brecht, trans. John Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 192.
38. John Willett mentions that Brecht's formulation of the aesthetic element of his theory is the direct influence of the idea of estrangement, "Priem Ostrannenija" (device of making strange), contained in the essay of the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovskij entitled "Art as Method." Willett bases his assumption on the fact that Brecht's formulation of his epic technique coincides with his return from a visit to Moscow in 1935, **op. cit.,** pp. 206-207. However, Käthe Rülicke-Weiler, the German critic, refutes this view and regards it as mere speculation, as there is no evident proof of any direct influence. **Brecht's Dramaturgy** (Die Dramaturgie Brechts) (Bertin : Henschelverlag, 1966), pp. 239-240.

no longer so, and it is only then that understanding can take place. Brecht wanted to introduce this scientific method into the theatre so that the theatre can also, with the help of alienation, present situations, people, ideas, emotions, etc. as not self-evident. That is, to free them from the a priori recognitions and to bestow upon them the character of uniqueness, historicality and changeability :

> Characters and incidents from ordinary life, from our immediate surroundings, being familiar, strike us as more or less natural. Alienating them helps to make them seem remarkable to us. Science has carefully developed a technique of getting irritated with the everyday, 'self-evident,' universally accepted occurences, and there is no reason why this infinitely useful attitude should not be taken over by art. It is an attitude which arose in science as a result of the growth in human productive powers. In art the same motive applies.(39)

Brecht came to the view that, with this method of presentation, the theatre could explore new areas which previously could not have been approached through pure empathy. That is, the alienation makes the presentation of the contradictions of modern life possible

> This technique allows the theatre to make use in its representations of the new social scientific method known as dialectical materialism. In order to unearth society's laws of motion this method treats social situations as processes, and traces out all their inconsistencies (contradictions). It regards nothing as existing except in so far as it changes, in other words is in disharmony with itself. This also goes for those human feelings, opinions and attitudes through which at any time the form of men's life together finds its expression.(40)

Throughout decades Brecht attempted to develop artistic devices of alienation which could present these contradictions. This task was a difficult

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39. Brecht, trans. John Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 140.
40. **Ibid.,** p. 193.

and complicated one for it entailed a radical renewal of all the theatrical devices for the new ends. Brecht did not only offer the theory, but he also applied it in his theatrical praxis with the Berliner Ensemble, which has proved the effectiveness of his method and resulted in his world fame. In this sense, Brecht's theory and praxis should be regarded as a major contribution to Marxist aesthetics in the field of the theatre.

Studies on Brecht's theatre usually distinguish between three areas which manifest his theory and praxis of the technique of alienation : text, production, performance. The distinction between the text and the production shows the practical possibilities of the application of the alienation method. In the written text alienation technique is employed in the presentation of characters, situations and plot. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Concerning text presentation, or performance, an alienated acting style is of major importance. To establish the distance between the spectator and the presented characters and events, theatrical devices are used in order to disillusion the spectator and to prevent empathy, or to make it difficult. These include the songs which interrupt the play's action; the direct address to the audience; the half-curtain which reveals the stage construction; the strong lighting; the scene titles; the unspecified scenery; projections and films; masks and half-masks. These devices are dialectically presented and have an instructice effect. To implement these devices effectively in order to distance the spectator from the presented characters, an alienated acting style should be adopted which presents the character in a detached way and renders the words as if they were in the third person in order to maintain the distance between actor and character. Describing the new devices, Brecht wrote in 1936 :

> The production took the subject-matter and the incidents shown and put them through a process of alienation : the alienation that is necessary to all understanding. When something seems 'the most obvious thing in the world' it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up. What is 'natural' must have the force of what is startling. This is the only way to expose the laws of cause and effect. People's

activity must simultaneously be so and be capable of being different.(41)

Brecht's application of alienation effects represents a new art which clarifies social processes by showing their strangeness. He is more concerned with the purpose of alienating these processes. In this way, he sets the new alienation technique against the old, mechanical, naive alienation techniques. The new alienation alienates the co-existence of people with the intention of making it controllable, making this controllability both the purpose and the source of the artistic experience.

In order to present the contradictions in processes and people, it does not suffice to place contradictory facts side by side; they should be presented in their causality and development. Therefore, the application of the laws of dialectical materialism is an essential feature of Brecht's theatre. Under the title "Dialectics and Alienation" (Dialektik und Verfremdung) Brecht cited different categories of dialectical materialism which form the basis of his technique of alienation :

> Alienation as an understanding (understanding — not understanding — understanding), Negation of negation.
>
> Accumulation of non-understanding until understanding occurs (transformation from quantity to quality),
>
> The particular in the general (the process in its uniqueness and oneness becomes typical).
>
> Moment of evolution (the transformation of feelings into other feelings of opposing art. Critique and empathy in one).
>
> Contradictoriness (this man in these relations, these consequences of these actions).
>
> To understand the one through the other (the numerous scenes

41. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 71.

acquire a new meaning and coherence with other scenes).
The leap (...epic evolution in leaps).

Unity of opposites (the opposite is found in unity...)

Practicability of knowledge (unity of theory and paraxis).(42)

Consequently, Brecht developed with his method of alienation artistic devices which are, on the aesthetic level, analogies of the laws and categories of dialectical materialism. In other words, alienation is an artistic method which reveals the dialectics of things and phenomena in the work of art. The means of alienation should be always presented in a new and developing view that corresponds with the social developments. The dialectically employed alienation technique makes knowledge its means and, thus, sets itself up against traditional alienation devices and acquires a new quality. This is because the new devices are the result of a specific use which reveals the knowledge of materialistic dialectics.

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42. "Verfremdung als ein Verstehen (verstehen — nicht verstehen — verstehen), Negation der Negation.

Häufung der Unverständlichkeiten, bis Verstehen eintritt (Umschlag von Quantität in Qualität).

Das Besondere im Allgemeinen (der Vorgang in seiner Einzigkeit, Einmaligkeit, dabei typisch).

Moment der Entwicklung das Uebergehen der Gefühle in andere Gefühle entgegengesetzter Art. Kritik und Einfühlung in einem).

Windersprüchlichkeit (dieser Mensch in diesen Verhältnissen, diese Folgen dieser Handlung).

Das eine verstanden durch das andere (die Szene, im Sinn zunächst selbständig, wird ihren Zusammenhang mit anderen Szenen noch als eines andern Sinns teilhaftig entdeckt).

Brecht takes up a position and invites the spectator to share his point of view. This sharing is not forced or induced in the spectator, it works rather according to a process of interpretation. Interpretation, however, should not be understood as mere passive contemplation. It is an active and subjective process of creative assimilation during which the spectator, by becoming conscious of the causes of his alienation, surpasses the existing conditions by applying his critical thinking to reality and finds the way towards change. By understanding reality man sets out to influence and change the actual world. His idea of reality fuses with actuality and becomes part of it. Reality is, thus, influenced by the human mind as much as the human mind is affected by reality. Hence, through a process of interaction between conscious comprehension and material reality, man creates himself by himself. Consequently, man achieves a state of de-alienation through self-consciousness of the existing conditions, and by surpassing them, is able to reach a state of integration. Such action implies decision making, which represents the personal initiative of the spectator as an integral element of the Brechtian theatre. Such initiative is based on the critical method provided by the theatrical expedience, and the revolutionary content which manifests the author's world view.

Brecht's social interpretation of the essence of alienation implies a certain kind of method that should cope with this interpretation. This method is derived from Brecht's understanding of dialectical materialism, which is held by Brecht himself as being the guiding line of his theatrical method, and as an essential factor in the understanding of the content and technique of his theatre. Towards the end of his life, to avoid further

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Der Sprung (...Epische Entwicklung mit Sprüngen).

Einheit der Gegensätze (im Einheitlichen wird der Gegensatz gesucht,...).

Praktizierbarkeit des Wissens (Einheit von Theorie und Praxis). Brecht, **op. cit.**, pp. 46-47. (Our own translation).

misunderstanding of his theatre, Brecht came to the conclusion that the most appropriate name for his theatre is the dialectical theatre. In one of his last essays entitled "Dialectics in the Theatre" he wrote in an editorial note :

> ... 'epic theatre' is too formal a term for the kind of theatre aimed at (and to some extent practised). Epic theatre is a prerequisite for these contributions, but it does not of itself imply that productivity and mutability of society from which they derive their main elements of pleasure. The term must therefore be reckoned inadequate, although no new one can be put forward.(43)

The penultimate paragraph of the published section confirms Brecht's preoccupation with dialectics in the field of the theatre :

> An effort is now being made to move on from the epic theatre to the dialectical theatre. In our view and according to our intention the epic theatre's practice — and the whole idea — were by no means undialectical. Nor would a dialectical theatre succeed without the epic element. All the same we envisage a sizeable transformation.(44)

Talking to Ernst Schumacher, Brecht expressed his disillusionment with the term "epic" for having been subject to many misunderstandings :

> I must admit that I have not been able to make it clear that the 'epic' element in my theatre applied to the social category. I am at present working on an amplification of my **Small Organon,** and I am asking myself seriously whether it would not be more practical to drop entirely the term epic theatre... And from the alienation effect, generally only the effect remains, separated from its social points of reference, separated from its purpose.(45)

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43. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 282.
44. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 281.
45. E. Schumacher, "He Will Remain," **Brecht As They Knew Him,** trans. John Peet, ed. Hubert Witt (London : Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), pp. 227-228.

Brecht, on many occasions, expressed his wish to change from "epic" to "dialectical" theatre. Early in 1931 he started formulating his theories of dialectical theatre in his essay "Dialectical Dramatics" (Dialektische Dramatik), which were later included in the appendices to "The Short Organum for the Theatre" in 1947. However, this notion remained fragmentary and lacking in a logical and consistent elaboration due to Brecht's untimely death. Yet, Brecht's references to his theatre as dialectical doubtlessly prove that he never approved of stability, always revising and overhauling his theories, and that his method of thinking and writing is based on the application of the dialectical materialist laws of motion. Yet he does not define the nature of the movement. We have deduced the nature of the movement from an early essay by Brecht written in 1934 and added later on after being revised and enlarged as an appendix to **The Life of Galileo** in 1948. The key word in this essay, entitled "Writing the Truth : Five Difficulties," is 'cunning' as being one of the means of overcoming the difficulties of telling the truth, which Brecht considers one of the main problems facing writers at all times, and a more crucial one for writers living under fascism :

> Many people, proud that they possess the courage necessary for the truth, happy that they have succeeded in finding it, into workable form and impatient that it should be grasped by those whose interests they are espousing, consider it superfluous to apply special cunning in spreading the turth. For this reason they often sacrifice the whole effectiveness of their work. At all times cunning has been employed to spread the truth, whenever truth was suppresed or concealed. Confucius falsified an old patriotic calendar. He changed certain words. Where the calendar read, "The ruler of Hun had the philosopher Wan killed because he said so and so," Confucius replaced **killed** by **murdered.** If the calendar said that tyrant so and so **died by assassination,** he substituted **was executed.** In this maner Confucius opened the way for a fresh interpretation of history... Confusius' sort of cunning is still valid today.(46)

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46. Brecht, "Writing the Truth : Five Difficulties," **The Life of Galileo,** ed. Charles Laughton (New York : Anchor Books, 1948), pp. 141-142.

This method represents a logical and consistent process of evolution which is neither linear nor circular, but spiral. This is the direct consequence of Brecht's adoption of the dialectical method. Therefore, the most adequate method in dealing with Brecht's thought and drama in general, and the problem of alienation in his plays in particular, would be the dialectical method which is based on dialectical and historical materialism, and which is explicitly stated by Brecht in the same essay:

> What is necessary for all writers in this age of perplexity and lightning change is a knowledge of the materialistic dialectic of economy and history. Method is good in all inquiry, but it is possible to make discoveries without using any method... indeed, even without inquiry. But by such a casual procedure one does not come to the kind of presentation of truth which will enable man to act on the basis of that presentation.(47)

Moreover, as it appears from Brecht's essay and his frequent use of the word 'cunning,' the dialectical method is not sufficient for the analysis and interpretation of Brecht's theatre. It is essential, therefore, in order to understand the dialectical nature of Brecht's theatre to apply the dialectical method through Brecht's own approach or way of handling it, which is at the same time inherent in a movement which we call spiral.

The spiral movement is the most accurate and elaborate expression of the laws of the dialectical method because it reveals the unity between the three laws of which the dialectical movement consists. Dialectics is concerned with universal laws. These laws operate everywhere embracing all aspects of reality. They are laws of nature, society and thought. The first law is that of the transformation of quantitative into qualitative changes. Quantitative changes occur constantly and gradually. Qualitative change takes place in the form of a break in this gradualness. This means that development, since it is the unity of quantitative and qualit-

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47. Brecht, ed. Charles Laughton, **op. cit.,** p. 136.

ative change, is at the same time the unity of continuity and discontinuity. All qualitative changes take place in the form of leaps. A certain process ends in a leap, which denotes the moment of qualitative change of an object, the break-through, and the critical change in its development. The forms of this leap depend not only on the nature of the object but also on the conditions in which the object is placed.

The second law is the law of the unity and struggle of opposites. The contradiction between quality and quantity is only one of the manifestations of the general law that inernal contradictions are inherent in all things and processes, and that this is the source and motive force of their development. This means that the world knows of no absolutely identical things or phenomena. When we speak of the identity of certain objects, identity presupposes that they are in some way different This means that every object is a unity of opposites. But this means not only the interdependence of opposites, but also their reciprocal negation. That is why this law is known as the law of the unity and struggle of opposites.

The third law is the law of the negation of negation. In no field can development occur that does not deny its previous forms of existence. But this kind of negation needs no second negation. The necessity for the second negation depends on the following : the initial form and that which negates it are opposites; they contain an abstract one-sidedness which must be overcome for further development to take place. Thus, the negation of negation is the synthesis of all previous development, the synthesis of these one-sidedly opposite forms which overcomes and resolves the contradiction between them. The process of the negation of negation is often expresed in the terms : thesis (initial point of departure), anti-thesis (first negation), synthesis (second negation). The effect of the law of negation of negation is that development moves not in a straight line but in a spiral, so that the ultimate point coincides with the point of departure, but on a higher level, each coil denoting a more developed state. Thus, this spiral movement implies continuity and discontinuity, or a combination of both the line and the circle. In a straight line the

point of departure is different from the point of arrival. In a circle both are the same, ending up where they started from. The contradiction between the line and the circle produces a new synthesis, i.e. the spiral movement.

According to the spiral movement and the law of the unity and struggle of opposites, the unity is inherent in the continuity which is implied in the spiral movement. The struggle is between progression and regression and progression again ; the process of regression results in further progression. Such progression can only be achieved through the process of regression under one condition, namely, if the shift is of a quanlitative and not a quantitative nature. If the shift is in quantity and not in quality, the movement takes place on the same level and not on a higher level, which is only achieved by a transformation from quantity into quality. Concerning the law of negation, the process tends upward into a higher form, so that the higher form negates what has preceded it, and the new higher form negates what the previous higher form has negated.

Brecht proceeds from this dialectical method, but has his own way of handling it which is expressed in his essay "Writing the Truth : Five Difficulties" which, in turn, reveals that Brecht's movement of thought is neither linear nor circular, but spiral. This interpretation proves that in order to apply Brecht's method we have to take into consideration, when we reveal the contradictions, that the process is controlled by the spiral movement. Thus, we should not expect from him the absolute truth, and at the same time we should not assume that he will lead us into doubt.

Brecht's theatre represents a process rather than fixed ideas, a process which intends to free the spectator from alienation. He does not offer any patterns or any closed systems, but rather forms that would appropriately show us how the dialectical process moves us from alienation to de-alienation. As a result of this process, the dialectical method along the spiral movement is both revolutionary and evolutionary; revol-

utinoary through the dialectical method and the law of the transformation from quantitative into qualitative change, and evolution is achieved through the spiral movement and the qualitative shift towards total negation of alienation. The process of evolution implies progression and regression. Growth implies regression for further progression with the ultimate aim of integration. The two movements, regression and progression, are integrated into one. To move towards the new vision, this process is essential, proceeding along the stages of contradiction and transcendence of contradiction.

If we want to apply the law of negation of negation, we have to form a futuristic vision. This futuristic vision must differ in quality from what has preceded it so that it is not mere repetition or addition in quantity, but is qualitatively distinctive. This is what establishes the link between the law of negation of negation and the law of the transformation from quantity into quality which help us form the futuristic vision. The law of negation of negation is the occasion for the relaziation of a qualitatively higher futuristic vision which would represent a future that is liberated from tht past.

According to the law of negation of negation, the causes of alienation represent the negation, and the removal of the causes of alienation are the negation of negation. The removal of contradictions which are responsible for alienation, takes place on the level of the spiral movement and does not take place in the void. Therefore, the basis of the dialectical movement is the spiral movement. It proceeds through the renewal of contradictions, i.e. presenting old contradictions in a higher form. The new concept represents a higher form of the old concept, so that the old reality would be involved in the new reality but on a higher level. The old reality involves the new reality but it is an alienated reality. Therefore, the removal of alienation necessitates a fresh, futuristic vision.

The point now is : how to apply this process of evolution to Brecht's plays through the method. Having deduced the method from his writings,

we put it as a premise and proceed from it to discuss how far he did succeed in applying the method to illuminate his futuristic vision in his plays. To explain the distinctiveness of Brecht's futuristic vision in contrast with other futuristic visions about previous conditions under fascism, we have to relate Brecht's vision with the problem of alienation in its twofold dimensions: a) the uncovering of the causes of alienation; b) the means of their elimination.

According to Brecht's approach to the dialectical method, truth as it is exemplified in action, i.e. in concrete, is linear and immediate. But 'cunning' makes truth mediate and indirect, hence, deeper, more complex and more effective. Truth exemplified through 'cunning' — which is the accurate expression of the dialectical movement — becomes mediate and indirect, thus, acquiring an evolutionary nature. It is represented in an ever changing higher form. 'Cunning' thus may be only interpreted through the spiral movement because it is ad infinitum correlating with the evolution of society. Moreover, it is not only 'cunning' which makes the spiral movement the appropriate one for the understanding of truth, but the concrete and revolutionary theory-praxis nature of Brecht's concept of alienation which relies on the revelation of the close relation between truth in the abstract and turth in the concrete. To avoid distortion of turth, Brecht moves from the abstract idea to its concrete presentation in concrete reality, so that the dialectical relation between abstract and concrete would result in the modification of the abstract, thus, producing a new and higher form of truth. In this way, the abstract becomes concrete action.

Hence, we conclude that the study of Brecht's concept and technique of alienation should be attempted against a background of the philosophical concept of alienation. Since the concept of alienation is not Brecht's own discovery, but has many philosophical and socio-political roots, it is necessary to trace these roots through a historical survey of the development of the concept in the variousi f elds in order to determine Brecht's own reception of the concept against this background. The historical survey helped in revealing the essential characteristics of the

concept and technique of alienation in Brecht's theatre which may be summed up in two major points. The first major point is that Brecht's theory of alienation (Verfremdung) is an aesthetic formulation of Hegel's philosophy about alienation (Entfremdung) and Marx's socio-economic and political interpretation of alienation, particularly the alienation of labour in the capilatist society. However, Brecht rejects Hegel's idealistic philosophical sytem and retains his dialectic after investing it with Marx's materialist interpretation of the causes of alenation, and his idea and treatment of alienation are the direct result ofthe Marxian influence.

The second point is that Brecht's epic technique which he developed and formulated out of the philosophical and socio-economic interpretation of alienation, is employed as a theatrical means for coveying that concept. The alienation effects are the theatrical medium whereby a distance is established between the audience and the performance to enable them to think critically about their state of alienation and to reach a practical solution for the problem. This concrete and practical solution is derived from the revolutionary-praxis nature of Brecht's concept and technique of alienation which stems from an interpretation of the alienated social reality in concrete terms, with the intention of revolutionizing that reality, i.e. achieving a radical elimination of alienation. In this sense, Brecht's theatre represents a process of alienation and de-alienation.

CHAPTER II

ALIENATION IN BRECHT'S THEATRE

As a beginning it is essential to note that there is, according to any thinker, a pivotal idea which—by nature and due to its latency and fertility—lies deep beneath the surface of immediate recognition. Though at times the pivotal idea may appear vague, it proceeds towards acquiring more depth and clarity, i.e. its clarity lies in its depth. This clarity is brought out through a process of conscious interpretation of the idea, a process which derives from the subjective consciousness of both creator and interpreter of the idea through its interaction with the existing objective conditions. The new acquired depth is dynamic; it transforms the idea through an analogous process, only on a higher level this time, to new dimensions (social, economic, political). Though the idea may not be clearly or fully definitive, it is on its way of being defined without becoming absolutely or completely definitive. In other words, we can say that the process of interpretation is determined by two factors : one is objective and the other subjective, and the reciprocal interaction and interdependence of the two factors is the underlying movement of the process. The objective factor consists of the unity and struggle of opposites, and the level on which the struggle takes place i.e. abstract and concrete, absolute and relative. The subjective factor is represented by the author's method of treatment.

Adopting this method, we will attempt to answer the major question of this chapter, namely, how far does Brecht's theatre succeed in revealing the causes of alienation and the means of man's liberation from alienation. The answer will be contained in the analysis and interpretation of the pivotal idea, alienation as concept and technique, as reflected in the content and form in Brecht's plays. This analysis will, in turn, reveal the evolution of the content and technique of alienation in Brecht's theatre throughout the various stages of its development, starting with the early stage (1918-1926) prior to the formulation of the theory of epic

theatre, to the middle stage (1926-33) during which Brecht studied Marxism and started formulating his epic theory through the musical operas and the Lehrstücke, to the third and last stage (1933-47) which is dominated by the great epic plays.

In the Jungle of the Cities (Im Dickicht der Städte) written in 1924, belongs to the early stage of Brecht's evolution between 1918 and 1924 before the formulation of his theory of epic theatre and the crystallization of the concept of alienation according to the principles of Marxist philosophy. However, this play is an early example and proof that the theatrical representation of man's state of alienation under capitalism is a question that preoccupied Brecht since the beginning of his career. This play is a good starting point for the analysis and interpretation of the evolution of Brecht's treatment of the concept of alienation because it sets a historical perspective within which we are able to trace the evolution of his treatment of the concept. We have chosen to concentrate on scene 10 from which we will proceed to the full analysis of the whole play. Proceeding from Brecht's statement : "This is a world, and a kind of drama, where the philosopher can pick his way better than the psychologist,"(1) we will tackle the play from the angle of alienation as a philosophical category being an overtly dominant problem that guides and shapes the world in which Garga and Shlink move and interact and which scene 10 represents in a condensed and crystallized form.

It is through this philosophical category that the motives of the characters can be explained rather than either through a one-dimensional technical analysis of the play's action or a psychological analysis of the characters' motives and actions.

The encounter between Shlink and Garga is a moment of self-revelation which lays bare or de-mystifies the nature of the struggle

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1. Bertolt Brecht, **Collected Plays Volume I** (1918-1923) (London : Methuen, 1970), pp. 437-438.

between the two characters. Through their encounter we detect the manner of their relationship which point to the nature of alienation as treated in the play, and which is technically incarnated or objectified in the symbol of the jungle. In this scene the concept of the jungle is summed up by Shlink in an idealized sentimentalism, and emerges as a dominant image which objectifies the abstract theme of alienation.

To quote Brecht writing in retrospect :

> ...it was a time (the early 1920s) when I appreciated sport, and boxing in particular, as one of the 'great mythical diversions of the giant cities on the other side of the herring pond." I wanted my new play to show the conclusion of 'fight for fighting's sake,' a fight with no origin other than the pleasure of fighting and no object except to decide who's 'the best man' ...My play was meant to deal with this pure enjoyment of fighting. Even while working on the first draft I noticed how singularly difficult it was to bring about a meaningful fight... and keep it going... I was unconsciously moving very close to the real struggle which was then taking place, though only idealized by me : the class struggle.(2)

This idealistic approach is reflected in the play in Shlink's words by which he tries to explain the nature of his fight with Garga and to identify the world in which they move by relating it to another realm, similar yet different :

> SHLINK : I've observed the animals. Love, the warmth of bodies in contact, is the only mercy shown us in the darkness. But the only union is that of the organs, and it can't bridge over the cleavage made by speech. Yet they unite in order to produce beings to stand by them in their hopeless isolation. And the generations look coldly into each other's eyes. If you cram a ship full to bursting with human bodies, they'll all freeze with loneliness... Yes, so great is man's isolation that not even a fight is possible. The forest. That's where mankind

2. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 438.

> comes from. Hairy with apes' jaws, good animals who knew how to live. Everything was so easy. They simply tore each other apart. I see them clearly, with quivering flanks, staring into the whites of each other's eyes, sinking their teeth into each other's throats and rolling down. And the one who bled to death among the roots was the vanquished, and the one who had trampled down the most undergrowth was the victor.(3)

Here Brecht concentrates on the bodily contact and on the style of the fighters, which correlates to his advice to the audience in the prologue: "Don't worry your heads about the motives for the fight, concentrate on the stakes. Judge impartially the technique of the contenders, and keep your eyes on the finish."(4) However, this does not help in unveiling the substance of the fight. The question what is it that made contact possible which is now lacking and stifling any such contact, remains unanswered. The reasons which separate and yet unite the 'natural jungle' and the 'stone jungle,' as F. Ewen calls them,(5) have to be located and analysed. The reasons lie in the phenomenon of alienation that stems from the inability of the primitive man to master nature and harness her for his needs: food and shelter. In his struggle to conquer nature, however, primitive man recognized one enemy i.e. the other who was also struggling for the same purpose. But when he came in contact with the other, that other formed a threat to his survival. However, there was another motive in this fight and of which primitive man was unconscious, namely, the drive to master nature or rather survival through mastery of nature. The conquest of nature was a necessity for progress which was marked by a breaking up into class divisions. The result was that man was stopped from controlling freely his way of interacting with nature. The two motives of survival and mastery of nature prevailed in primitive classless society. With the breaking up into classes began the

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3. Brecht, op. cit., pp. 172-13.
4. **Ibid.,** p. 118.
5. Frederick Ewen, **Bertolt Brecht, His Life, His Art, and His Life** (London: Caler & Boyards, 1970), p. 120.

class society and class struggle. Brecht, in this play, is mainly concerned with portraying this struggle in the class society through the relation between Garga and Shlink.

Shlink's encounter with Garga is in the market place, where Shlink the dealer goes to buy a commodity. In his transaction he does not differentiate between human beings and goods; for him they are commodities for profit-making. He offers to buy Garga's opinion about a book, and when the latter refuses he offers to buy him altogether. Garga is drawn into the fight as if by his inability to resist a natural instinct. But by challenging Shlink, Garga accepts the deal and becomes, thus, a commodity. Instead of the natural jungle we have the market place; the city, which is governed by laws of exchange value whereby man has his price and is traded like any other commodity. Garga and his family are used as instruments in the fight which is not a genuine fight but a reification of human relations in terms of commodity exchange. The fight is fake because Garga is not an equal party but an instrument of capital used to fulfil its course, profit-making, through a competition which is distorted by the fight, so that what we get is 'shadow-boxing' as Brecht calls it. However, to get down to the real contact, the fetish has to be eliminated. But because reification has become the order of society, what man can possibly hope to reach is bodily contact, a contact between things rather than real full human beings. Garga, realizing at the end that he has been used, and that his fight and accomplished revenge, have not liberated him, seeks freedom. But instead he escapes from one jungle to another because he fails to unmask the true reality of the jungle. His explanation is metaphysical and does not reach to the concrete reality because he is still under the domination of reified relations. He fails to understand or even consider the process which leads to the state of reification; instead he concentrates on the end result which is characteristic of reified, alienated consciousness. Thus, he remains alienated from humanity and reality i.e. the process of development as a human being exercising his capacity to control his world through his growing self-consciousness. Similarity with man in the natural jungle is still there, only on a higher level; reified consciousness is emerging into

self-consciousness only attained here on a metaphysical level, therefore remains partial. This partial self-recognition is a reflection of the reified structure of consciousness.

Garga and Shlink's contemplations spring from the reified consciousness. Both represent the same state of human self-alienation. However, Shlink who represents the property-owning class, feels at home in this self-alienation and recognizes it as a natural process because it gives him the appearance of human existence. Garga, on the other hand, representing the exploited masses, sees in alienation the reality of an inhuman existence that crushes and destroys him. This explains the end of the play and justifies the behaviour of both Shlink and Garga; the first gives in to his impending doom by committing suicide, while the latter flees hoping to meet a different and less destructive destiny.

The situation between Garga and Shlink manifests clearly that every possibility presents manking with two alternatives, that of alienation and that of de-alienation. Thus, the solution of this situation is contained in the nature of the struggle which takes place on the level of ideas in the characters' final encounter. This gives way to a tendency to preserve rather than eliminate alienation. This fixation of alienation is caused by Brecht's historical perspective as reflected in the play. Brecht's idea of history at that time is defined by him thirty years later (1954):

> ...at that time I had in mind a strange historical conception, a history of mankind seen through incidents on the mass scale and of specific historical significance, a history of continually new, and different modes of behaviour, observable here and there on our planet.(6)

The idea that history consists of modes of behaviour rather than of a number of material forces that determine behaviour sticks only to psychological motives and neglects their emergence from the material

6. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 438.

conditions. Thus, an understanding of behaviour is rendered impossible as well as the recognition of the causes of alienation and the consequent means of their elimination. This idealistic vision inevitably leads to a fixation of alienation. The play manifests Brecht's tendency towards the qualitative nature of dialectical changes without it becoming conscious of the material nature of the antagonisms which it lays bare and to which it gives artistic form. It does not consciously present the nature of the dialectics of history and the process by which the barriers of reification can be shattered. This is only possible when the apparent contradiction incarnated in the fight is mediated through the primary or essential fight i.e. class struggle which reflects the reification of human relations and of which Garga and Shlink's fight is only a shadow. Hence, Brecht's comment : "The play's dialectic is of a purely idealistic kind."(7)

Through the fight Garga and his family are forced into total disintegration and loss of identity beyond recognition. They are transformed through the exploiting nature of Shlink's relation with them. The initially united family is unconscious of its historical situation. It is forced to disintegrate into alienations of all kinds and, thus, becomes increasingly aware of its historical situation by living it in reality as embodied in the fight. The fight is ultimately recognized as the incarnation of the struggle between two incompatible and irreconcilable forces i.e. social classes. Forced into the fight, Garga seeks liberation on his own initiative which is derived from his partial coming-to-consciousness. This allows him only to reach a level of atomic contemplation which fails to see the world in continuous events. Thus, according to this atomic contemplation, the unity between the subject and the object remains unrealized, for the historical factor in its idealized level fails to be an effective mediator in the course of change or in the emergence from necessity to freedom of consciousness which demands an awareness of the socio-historical context of the problem of alienation.

According to the concept of the dialectical movement in spiral, a

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7. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 438.

change in quality takes the form of a leap. The leap is rightly expressed by Brecht in his notes on the play :

> In the end it dawned on the fighters that their fight was mere shadow-boxing; even as enemies they could not make contact. A vague realization emerged : that under advanced capitalism fighting for fighting's sake is only a wild distortion of competition for competition's sake.(8)

This sudden realization which takes the form of a leap rather than of a steady progression on the part of the writer is reflected by the characters in scene 10. This scene represents a qualitative shift in the consciousness of both characters though only on a metaphysical level of individual consciousness. The only objective trace of change is the arrival of the lynching mob which represents a positive factor of change and could be considered as the missing mediation in bringing about a new synthesis of the problem. Garga's departure, Shlink's suicide and the arrival of the lynching mob are all signs of a moving and changing world. This movement represents a transition from a present state or the possible, to an attainable situation which is only materialized by the initiative of human beings.

Applying one of the laws of dialectics, the negation of negation, in representing the situation between Shlink and Garga, Brecht confronts them as well as their audience with the end result of bourgeois ideology: the reified alienated ideology which is an expression of the negation of human identity by commodity fetishim. This confrontation implies a preservation of what is being negated. The confrontation through the criticism of bourgeois reified relations acts as a second negation or the negation of negation, presented by bourgeois ideology through the process of unity and struggle of opposites manifested by the annulling of the object through preservation and elimination at the same time. By

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8. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 438.

preserving it he transcends it to a higher level. It is because and in spite of the fight that both characters reach a change in their situation.

Fighting for fighting's sake, being a distortion of competition for competition's sake, is a second negation of the first one. It thus helps to affirm and negate the existence of alienation as well as its possible elimination. However, the last possibility is remote due to the metaphysical interpretation of the problem which is more inclined towards a fixation of alienation rather than its elimination. Garga's romantic escape, his desperate act of rebellion by setting fire to the lumber factory, and the cries of the lynching mob which Shlink recognizes as a "white kind" of protest, do not provide any real alternative for the total state of alienation.

An essential concomitant of reification is the disintegration of an originally unified structure into a set of antinomies. There is a host of antinomies in the play : male / female, labour / capital, old / young, country / city, which are all unified and accentuated by the image of facelessness which objectifies the state of complete annihilation of human identity resulting from reified relations.

The male / female antinomy is manifested in the fact that women are treated as commodities, that is, as alien autonomous objects for sex which ultimately destroys and annihilates the human identity of women and threatens their total existence. Mary's words : "I'm never anything more than half, I can't even love, it's only vanity,"(9) are an expression of utter sense of loss and self-alienation. The facelessness image is expressed in her words at another occasion : "It's not my face any more. It's not me," to which Garga replies : "People remain what they are even if their faces fall apart,"(10) which is again a confirmation of another antimony, namely that of appearance / essence.

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9. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 153.
10. **Ibid.,** p. 167.

The labour / capital antinomy is expressed by Shlink and Garga in their final confrontation :

Shlink : The men who conquer the world like to lie on their backs.

Garga : And those who own it work.(11)

This reflects an awareness of a totally divided world between owners and workers. Realizing the transformation in Garga, Shlink observes : "All that was in your face. But now it is as hard as amber, which is transparent; here and there dead insects can be seen in it."(12)

In the Jungle of the Cities bears traces of the later developed technique of "Epic" theatre, which was then starting to germinate in Brecht's mind. The structure of the play is neither Aristotelian nor epic; it is an amalgamation of the two contradictory styles, a contradiction out of which emerged later a new synthesis : the "Lehrstück" (the didactic play). Although the play concentrates on dramatic action in the sense of exposition, development, complication and denouement, or beginning, middle and end in the Aristotelian sense, this steady progression is sometimes disrupted by small episodic scenes which interrupt the dramatic unity. In scene 9 the disruption is achieved by the use of music and narration. Scene 10, which represents a leap in the development of the characters and incidents, is also a diversion from the traditional dramatic sequence of solving the conflict. The characters are living characters as well as concrete objectification of abstract antinomies. In representing the character of the bourgeois man as an abstract being. Brecht concretizes him in a particular character and reveals the details of his way of life and thinking and approach to certain problems. Through the concrete he reveals the abstract concept of alienation as reflected in concrete situations which represent the reified behaviour and character

11. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 147.
12. **Ibid.,** p. 153.

structure of the characters involved. He acquaints us with persons and events before he suggests to us what to think of them. The relation between Garga and Shlink reveals the dramatic complexity of Brecht's dramaturgy in interrelating living characters with one another. Garga lives through Shlink and Shlink lives through Garga. Yet Garga represents the negation of Shlink. The contradiction between Shlink and Garga results in a dialectical development. Each party passes from the defensive to the offensive and from the offensive to the defensive, so that the hero becomes the villain and the villain becomes the fallen hero, i.e. they interchange roles. In this sense, the starting point of the struggle is negated; but then begins the negation of the negation in which the struggle has been enriched by all the results of the antithesis and has reached a higher synthesis.

Some of the later developed technique of the alienation effects, or A-effects (Verfremdungseffekte) are used in this play. The first evidence is in the setting. In his early notes on the play Brecht writes: "The play is set in an unreal, chilly Chicago."(13) The contradiction between 'unreal' and 'Chicago' is typical of the dialectical representational style of Brecht's epic theatre. It represents the general through the particulr or the universal through the historically unique and concretized events in time and space. He writes again:

> My choice of an American setting is not, as has frequently been suggested, the result of a romantic disposition. I could just as well have picked Berlin, except that then the audience, intead of saying, 'That character's acting very strangely, strikingly, peculiarly,' would simply have said 'It's a very exceptional Berliner who behave like that.' Using a background (American) which naturally suited my characters, covering them rather than showing them up, seemed the easiest way of drawing attention to the odd behavior of widely representative contemporary human types. In a German setting these same types would have been romantic; they

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13. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 437.

would have contrasted with their setting, not with a romantic audience.(14)

This dislocation or distancing of the setting is nothing other than the representation of an object as recognizable and strange at the same time, or as Brecht states later on in "A Short Organum for the Theatre": "A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar."(15) It is the alienation which brings about an understanding of the nature of the struggle. Through the alienated setting, the audience understands that the struggle is not local but universal, and what seems to be a microcosm of capitalism is really only a partial instance of a wider and more universal system. The focus on an American setting shifts the audience back to Germany, from Chicago to Berlin. On the temporal level the play represents a society that is the product of a phase of advanced capitalism; from time level the play moves to the spatial to emphasize the global nature of the issue. By negating the German setting he affirms it in the American background; by displacing it he places it within a historical context from time to space; capitalism in America and capitalism in Germany. By removing the characters from their German background he universalizes them; he makes them unusual or odd, and thus invites the audience's rational response and avoids their romantic response.

In the Jungle of the Cities proves that the early stage in Brecht's career implies the seeds of his further development. It carries within it the contradiction between the opposite tendencies, internal and external reality of man. The internal reality treated in early plays is a personal one in which man is portrayed as an individual without definite features and in isolation from external factors. The problem of alienation is represented as the personal sense of estrangement and self-alienation through individual, internal conflict. In the early plays, Brecht concentrates

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14. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 437.
15. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 192.

on the inner reality and directs a revolt against external reality. which is developed in the later plays.

To answer the question : how far does Brecht's theatre, founded on the concept of alienation, succeed in practice, in outside, objective reality, it would be necessary to treat the evolution of Brecht's theatre from the early stage, where alienation is represented as an inner and individual problem rather than a reflection of an outer social reality. This process represents the evolution from "rebellion" to "revolution". However, this necessitates first a definition of the terms "rebellion" and "revolution" in order to make the distinction clear before we apply them to Brecht's stages of evolution.

To give an accurate definition of "rebellion" and "revolution" that would apply to the stages of evolution of Brecht's theatre, we will adhere to our method. This necessitates the placing of the phenomenon—in this case "rebellion" and "revolution—within a specific sphere. If we place the phenomenon within the social sphere, we could define society as an organic body in which the parts, i.e. individuals, do not form the whole because the whole (society) is bigger than the sum total of its parts. Hence, the whole is essentially dynamic and not static, and the dynamic whole is necessarily in constant change and development. However, development can either be a radical change or a partial change. Radical change implies social relations and, hence, from this angle, radical change is considered a revolution. In this sense, revolution encompasess all human spheres; science, art and literature, as well as society. Thus, the revolutionary is someone, in any human sphere, whose objectives are to achieve a radical change of the existing system. In other words, the revolutionary is he who transcends the status quo, since the will to transcend is always linked with the will of radical change. However, the revolutionary does not derive his will from his own self because the existing social relations are not of his own making, but are the product of one or a number of social classes. Therefore, the transcendence of the status quo can only be achieved by an ascending social class. Consequently, the will of the revolutionary is necessarily derived from this ascending class. Hence,

by the very nature of his will, the revolutionary rises above himself and transcends his own individual self to join that of the others. In this sense, the identity which unites him with other revolutionaries can be materialized.

On the other hand, the mere will for change stops at the limits of rebellion. The rebel is someone who is only seeking partial changes in the system without interfering with the integrity and basic structure of that system. According to the rebel, partial change is mainly intended for the realization of his own personal projects. Hence, his rebellion against the milieu is merely an act of negative protest which makes the transcendence of the milieu (i.e. existing social relations) impossible because it does not develop into revolution. This negative rejection does not imply any vision of an alternative system that would solve man's problems and eliminate social injustice. Whereas positive rejection i.e. revolution, implies the solution of radical change and offers a futuristic vision towards the realization of that solution. According to Albert Camus, in his protest against the status quo, the rebel is "A man who says no : but whose refusal does not imply a renunciation. He is also a man who says yes as soon as he begins to think for himself."(16) Therefore, it is only very likely that any sign of concern shown by the milieu towards the rebel, could very easily put an end to his rebellion. However, this is not possible in the case of the revolutionary because the milieu's attempts to win him over are useless for he has his own will of radical change of the whole existing system. Moreover, the will of change necessitates a consciousness of the object of change. Consciousness is understanding in the sense that it implies a process of cognition of objective reality. In this sense, understanding is a philosophical process. Therefore, the revolutionary must necessarily be a philosopher, whereas the opposite is not always true or necessary, that is, not all philosophers are revolutionaries. The philosophy of the revolutionary philosopher, in any time, accompanies social progress, i.e. it is a philosophy of action. Whereas the philosophy of the non-revolutionary does not enhance social progress and is, therefore, a philosophy of reaction. In this sense, a revolutionary action means the transcendence of the status quo, or the

present, to the future. Therefore, the revolutionary possesses a futuristic vision. On the other hand, the reaction of the non-revolutionary, or the rebel, means an adherence to the present and a refusal to transcend the status quo. The logical conclusion of all this is that the philosophy of the revolutionary defines what has not been yet defined, while that of the rebel states what is already definite and is, theretore, tautological.

In Brecht's case, the conscious understanding of objective reality represents itself in his deep concern with the problem of man's alienation, particularly the alienation of the working class, in a capitalist class society. His observation of the reflections of the phenomenon were translated by him in the form of his theory of the theatre which constitutes the philosophy of his drama. Hence, the social content of Brecht's philosophical theatre represents a transition from rebellion to revolution through the conscious development and definition of the problem of alienation. The more it became clearer that alienation was the product of class relations which impose certain social relations, which Brecht perceived in specific social situations, the more defined his philosophy became. He conceived of social progress in terms of a classless system of social relations free from exploitation and alienation. This vision of a future society represents Brecht's transcendence of existing social reality which he dramatically conveyed in his plays throughout the stages of his development. His plays reveal his conviction of the advent of revolution and his belief that the realization of this society is the historical responsibility of the people who suffer most from alienation, namely, the proletarian class which is for that matter the most revolutionary class and is by nature of its class position, the ascending class.

The development of Brecht's theatre, from the point of view of content, represents a shift from man as an individual self (in the stage of rebellion) to man as a social being. However, in this shift, Brecht

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16. Albert Canus. The Rebel, trans. Anthony Bawer (London Penguin, 1973), p. 19.

maintains a dialectical relation between the subjective factor (individual character) and society. Accordingly, sometimes society is seen as an obstacle in the way of the character's development, wiping out human qualities. The treatment of man as an object rather than a subject is a necessary step for the objective consciousness of the historical consciousness of social reality and the necessity of its change through revolution, after which comes another more advanced stage. The change from individual self to social self is a qualitative change which represents the decisive transition from rebellion to revolution, while the later shift from man as a social being to the concentration on individual characters in particular situations, is only a quantitative change. Hence, the stages of evolution of Brecht's theatre represent a development from individual consciousness to social consciousness. In the early period, from Baal (1918) to **In the Jungle of the Cities** (1924) until **Man is Man** (1926) Brecht concentrated on the represenation of problems of man as an individual, treating his basic problem as that of alienation from self out of which other problems emerge. Man's unconsciousness of his alienation is the result of his alienated consciousness, as being alienated from his self, man is actually a split man and only has the illusion that he is a whole man. The elimination of such alienation necessitates a complete awareness, that is, an awareness of both subject and object. Hence, social, political and economic dimensions are added in order to give a complete picture of the various forms of alienation and to lead man to consciousness. The transition from the early rebellion within the limits of the individual self (personal, psychological conflict), to a revolutionary extension of this conflict to the social domain by directing the conflict outside the self towards society, corresponds to the dialectical movement in spiral.

The key to Brecht's radicalness in his transition from rebellion to revolution is man. At this stage Brecht started formulating his theory of epic theatre as a radical alternative to Aristotelian or dramatic theatre. The theatrical innovations which represent the epic theatre are described by Brecht in the famous table which contains the two sets of characteristics and which Brecht describes as shifts of emphases rather than

complete or absolute anti-theses. The same set of characteristics is repeated in relation to music in which the shift of emphasis is between 'dramatic opera' and 'epic opera.' In the formative stage of his epic theory, during which he produced his two major operas **The Threepenny Opera** and **Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny,** music plays au important part in realizing Brecht's new thematic and technical innovations. In this sense, music plays a major and vital role in the development of Brecht's theatre. It is a leap in the evolution of his treatment of the theme of alienation, as well as a revolutionizing of the concept of music in the theatre. Brecht now turns to alienated man in the theatre and, through the 'musical play' or the 'opera,' he moves a major step towards the realization of man's liberation from alienation in one of the important spheres of society, namely the theatre. Alienation in the field of the theatre is described by Brecht :

> ...by imagining that they (musicians, writers and critics) have got hold of an apparatus which is out of their control, which is no longer (as they believe) a means of furthering output but has become an obstacle, and specifically to their own output as soon as it follows a new and original course which the apparatus finds awkward or opposed to its aims. Their output becomes a matter of delivering the goods... the means of production do not belong to the producer; and as a result his work amounts to so much merchandise, and is governed by the natural laws of mercantile trade. Art is merchandise.(17)

The fetishization of art in the bourgeois theatre i.e. turning it into a commodity, is a mark of man's (artist's) alienated situation in the theatre under which his own activity is turned into the activity of another and for another. The only solution to this problem, according to Brecht, is production. However, production under capitalism is turned into merchandise, that is, it becomes alienated labour due to the institution of private property and division of labour which, in he field of drama, is,

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17. Brecht, trans. John Willett, **op. cit.,** pp. 34-35.

reflected in the division between operas and plays or, in other words, plays in which words are only sung and plays in which words are only spoken. Hence, according to Brecht, since "The theatre apparatus's priority is a priority of means of production,"(18) under the capitalist mode of production comercialized society turns art into commodity and man, the artist, becomes alienated from his products.

The solution, which the new music provides, is contained in the concept of "appropriation." Man's dislocated existence, as described by Marx in his interpretation of man's alienation from his products, places "appropriation" as a key category in the understanding of alienated labour :

> Appropriation is the interaction between man's senses and nature, in which the powers involved use the nature they come into contact with for their own ends. "Appropriation", in Marx's writing, always refers to the realization of some or other of man's powers.(19)

In the case of Brecht's operas, the music, as a means of production in the field of playwriting, is used as one way of appropriation. The senses involved during the process are eyes and ears. Hans Eisler, the musical theoretician and Brecht's collaborator throughout his career, writes about the function of music in relation to the senses of sight and hearing :

> The eye is always an organ of exertion, labour, and concentration; it grasps a definite object. The ear of the layman, on the other hand, as contrasted to that of the musical expert, is indefinite and passive. One does not have to open it, as one does the eye, compared to which it is indolent and dull. But this indolence is subject to the taboo that society imposes upon every form of laziness. Music as an art has always been an attempt to circumvent this taboo, to transform

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18. Brecht, trans. J. Willet, **op. cit.,** p. 43.
19. B. Ollman, **Alienation : Marx's Conception of Man in a Capitalist Society** (London Lawrence and Wishert, 1971), p. 31.

> the indolence, dreaminess, and dullness of the ear into a matter of concentration, effort and serious work. Today indolence is not so much overcome as it is managed and enhanced scientifically. Such a rationally planned irrationality is the very essence of the amusement industry in all its branches. Music perfectly fits the pattern.(20)

This new rational outlook on the function of music and its effect during the process of acoustical perception, corresponds to Brecht's idea of the role of music in epic theatre as he states in one of the items of the two sets of characteristics of "dramatic opera" and "epic opera," the emphasis is shifted in "epic opera" to "music that gives the attitude."(21) The word "orientation," translated from the German "Verhalten," is another category in the process of production besides "appropriation" : "Orientation (Verhalten) according to Marx has to do with how we perceive patterns, assign places and worth, and, consequently, involves setting up an entire framework for our action vis a vis the rest of the world."(22) The "orientation," or the adoption of a certain position vis-a-vis the world, must have a reference point. The reference point in Brecht's theatre is the theme of alienation which constitutes the content of the new music, and which has always been smothered in the old opera because it has been usually wrapped up in a spell of unreality. The question which occupied Brecht at the time was how to make the new music help man in appropriating reality. Brecht's view about the new music is : "Only in the opera does the human being have the chance to be human."(23) The new music derives its humanizing element from its being "in a certain sense philosophical."(24) This "certain sense" lies in the concept of alienation as a philosophical category. The philosophical

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20. Hans Eisler, "Eye, Ear and the Function of Music," M. Soliman (ed.), **Marxism and Art** (New York : Vintage Books, 1974), p. 252.
21. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 38. Willett translated "Verhalten" as "attitude," whereas it should be "orientation."
22. B. Ollman, **op. cit.,** p. 32.
23. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 41.
24. **Ibid.,** p. 89.

orientation which the new music takes vis-a-vis the world (i.e. the theatre, the old music and the audience) is illustrated by Brecht's phrase "gestic music." According to Brecht's definition :

> Gest is not supposed to mean gesticulation; it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men... the social gest is the gest relevant to society, the gest that allows conclusions to be drawn about the social circumstances.(25)

The new music which establishes the social "gestus" is scientifically and rationally based and it intends to convey the rational element which is smothered in bourgeois "culinary opera," Brecht's famous phrase. Brecht remarks that the "irrationality of opera lies in the fact that rational elements are employed, solid reality is aimed at, and at the same time it is all washed out by the music."(26) In Brecht's epic music the element of reason is emphasized in order to eliminate the irrationality of traditional music. The rational element is used here for a specific purpose which is of a social nature as illustrated by "gestic music," which represents the basic "gestus" of the play and determines its social function.

The social function of the new music is twofold : to present bourgeois ideology and to criticize it at the same time, so that the member of the audience sees his wishes not merely fulfilled but also criticized (sees himself not as the subject but as the object), he is theoretically in a position to appoint a new function for the theatre."(27) By preserving

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25. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 104. Willett translates "gestus" into the English word "gest" which is an obsolete word meaning " 'bearing, carriage, mien' as the nearest equivalent, and its adjective 'gestic.' " **Ibid.,** p. 42. This literal translation does not, however convey the meaning and intention of Brecht's term in the sense of social orientation as described above.
26. **Ibid.,** p. 35.
27. **Ibid.,** p. 43.

bourgeois conceptions expressed in music, the new music negates those very conceptions by criticizing them, and so acts as the negation of negation. It acts as an element of rationalization by establishing a certain basic "gestus" instead of performing "the role of Fate"(28) as in traditional opera. This is achieved through the sort of "speaking-against-the-music which can have strong effects (and) ... which is independent from music and rhythm,"(29) and which is employed in this manner so as to bring out into focus the content of the play which is normally concealed in the traditional opera.

Commenting on Kurt Weill's music in **The Threepenny Opera,** Brecht praises the dialectical possibilities of the music: "...the music, just because it took up a purely emotional attitude and spurned none of the narcotic attractions, became an active collaborator in the stripping bare of the middle class corpus of ideas."(30) The idea of philosophical music which "avoids narcotic effects, chiefly by linking the solution of musical problems to the clear and intelligible underlining of the political and philosophical meaning of each poem,"(31) is employed by linking the two planes: the philosophical plane, as personified in alienation as a theme, and the technical plane as presented in the songs and music as alienation effects. The social function of the music is realized in the social gest which is achieved through the song. The song, as A effect, is the alienation that brings about an understanding of the nature of alienation as a state of being. A. Wirth distinguishes between two levels in the structure of Brecht's plays, which he calls the "stereometric structure," namely, the dramatic and the philosophical: "On the philosophical level Brecht formulates the moral of the play. In doing so, he uses two methods: either he expresses the moral indirectly, or he resorts

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28. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 89.
29. **Ibid.,** p. 45.
30. **Ibid.,** p. 86.
31. **Ibid.,** p. 89.

to 'direct' formulation."(32)

The theme of **The Threepenny Opera,** broadly speaking, is alienation. The most outstanding form of alienation is presented in the relation between man and woman. It is one of the extreme forms of alienation because it represents man's estrangement from nature, and his total inability to control or "appropriate" the world around him. This theme is concretized in "The Jealousy Duet," which shows how the natural relation between man and woman has become an unnatural, reified relation. In this song, Lucy the mistress, and Polly the wife, interchange roles. This reveals that the usually accepted roles of each as imposed by bourgeois morality are false. The division of roles is groundless because the truth is that such society assigns for all women one role. However, it puts gradations for exploitation by legalizing one activity and subjecting the other to the sanctions of the law which, in any case, "exists simply and solely for the exploitation of those who don't understand,"(33) as Peachum bluntly admits. The song reveals that this dichotomy between wife and mistress is illusory by making both women exchange roles. The refrain is the indirect expression of the theme of exploitation of women. It exposes the unity and struggle which control and guide the activities of both women :

> **Both :** Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha.
> Mackie and I like turtle-doves were happy.
> He loves just me and you can't take him from me.
> How could our love be over ?

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32. "In der 'philosophischen Ebene' formuliert Brecht auch die Moral des Stückes. Er wendet dabei zwei Methoden an : Entweder bringt er die Moral des Werkes indirekt zum Ausdruck, oder er greift zu 'direkten' Formulierung." Andrej Wirth, "On the Stereometric Structure of Brechtian Plays" (Ueber die stereomerische Struktur der Brechtschen Stücke), **Episches Theater,** ed. Reinhold Grimm (Berlin: DED, 1977), p. 132.
33 Brecht, **The Threepenny Opera** (London : Eyre Methuen, 1973), p. 53.

I'm not in any danger
From such brazen hussy.
Ridiculous.(34)

The interchangeability of characters shows the dialectical unity between both wife and mistress. In the refrain the wife is converted into the mistress and the mistress into the wife. Both are insecure and restless because both are treated as objects for pleasure and are used as means for profit-making by their lover and their parents (Lucy is exploited by her father, the police commissioner, and Polly by her parents the Peachums for whom she represents their bread-winner). Hence, the activity of both women is turned against them and alienates them from their realization of themselves. The duet shows both women as one divided, ambivalent character performing the assigned role of wife/ mistress as two sides of one coin : exploitation. which is Brecht's direct critique of bourgeois social values.

The end in view of Brecht's satire is to criticize the bourgeois capitalist system through the characters' relationships in the play. In revealing the relationship between the characters and their activities, he exposes the contradictions between two worlds, namely, that of bankers and thieves. This effect is technically achieved through the language as an alienation effect. Macheath says: "... it's a matter of weeks, until I switch completely to banking business"(35) The words "completely to banking business' indicate, or rather insinuate, that Macheath's thieving activities are hardly different from banking business; as a matter of fact, they are identical. This establishes the contradiction between theworld of thieves and that of bankers. It shows how the higher level (the world of bankers) of the apparently honest, respectable, legitimate bankers, is understood more clearly through the lower level, namely, the world of thieves. In this way, Brecht's stance towards the problem is

34. Brecht, **op. cit.**, p. 42.
35. **Ibid.**, p. 67.

established through his satire of the bourgeois world of economics and social relations.

Brecht's decisive transition from rebellion to revolution is represented by his strong political commitment to the cause of the revolution and is artistically expressed in the "Lehrstücke," generally referred to in English as the didactic plays. Writing about **The Flight of the Lindberghs,** a radio play written in 1929 and rewritten in 1930 as a "Radiolehrstück" (radio didactic play) for boys and girls, Brecht defines the Lehrstücke: **"Der Flug der Lindberghs** is valueless unless learned from. It has no value as art which would justify any performance not intended for learning. It is **an object of instruction.**"(36) This applies to all the Lehrstücke which were written within the period 1929-1932 before Brecht's exile in 1933 after Hitler's seizure of power.

The question what does the Lehrstücke instruct, is negatively answered by the German critic Herbert Lüthy : "...the characteristic of Brecht's didactic theatre is that it teaches nothing."(37) Justifying his answer, Lüthy goes on to say :

> For him (Brecht), the form of the didactic piece is an end in itself. Brecht's ideas **about** the theatre, and his fundamental idea is that the theatre should teach—but what it should teach remains undefined. It is significant that Brecht has never found a poetic image, or even a formulation of his own, for the context of his teaching.(38)

Our answer to Lüthy's contentions will be an attempt to prove two issues in contradiction to his opinion : firstly, the Lehrstücke contain Brecht's theoretical formulation of the problems of alienation and the necessity of consciousness and elemination of alienation; the second issue is

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36. Brecht, trans. J. Willet, **op. cit.,** p. 31
37. Herbert Lüthy, "Of Poor Bert Brecht, **"Encounter,** Vol. XXXIV (July, 1956), p. 118.
38. **Ibid.**

related to the first one, namely, that the Lehrstück as a theatrical form, teaches a specific message for a very specific and practical purpose and is not, as Lüthy claims, an end in itself.

The Lehrstücke are qualitatively different both in content and form from Brecht's early plays, and particularly from **In the Jungle of the Cities,** because they represent a change in Brecht's treatment of alienation both as a social mode of being and as a theatrical method. The problem of alienation is now directed outside the self i.e. away from the self instead of towards the self. This qualitative change was the product of the quantitative accumulation represented in two factors, one objective and the other subjective. The objective factor is the socio-political conditions in Weimar Germany between 1919 and 1933, starting with the abortive Communist military uprising in 1919 which ended in the brutal murder of the two leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht; the defeat of the Socialist movement and the succession of the Social Democrats; the disintegration of the economy which was represented by the growing inflation, tremendous unemployment and the ultimate outbreak of famine, and culminating in the rise of fascism in Germany under Hitler and in Italy under Mussolini.(39)

These strong objective conditions have effectively influenced Brecht's thinking and provided the data necessary for the formulation of the problem as well as its solution. The subjective factor which represents Brecht's reaction to the objective conditions came in 1926, the year in which Brecht discovered by reading Marx's **Capital** the socio-economic conditions which breed alienation. Writing in retrospect, Brecht comments on his own transformation during that period :

> When I read Marx's **Capital** I understood my plays. Naturally I want to see this book widely circulated. It wasn't of course that I found I had unconsciously written a whole pile of

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19. James Joll, **Europe Since 1870** (London : Penguin, 1976), pp. 244-245.

> Marxist plays; but this man Marx was the only spectactor for my plays I'd ever come across. For a man with interest like his must of necessity be interested in my plays, not because they are intelligent but because he is—they are something for him to think about.(40)

In the course of his studies which lasted from 1926 until 1928 Brecht was formulating his theory of epic theatre. Elisabeth Hauptmann, Brecht's collaborator, reports about this period in Brecht's life :

> Finally Brecht started to read national economics. He asserted that money practices were obscure, he had to see what money theories were like. But even before he came to important discoveries, at least for himself, he had concluded that the old (great) form of drama wasn't fit for representing such modern processes as the international distribution of wheat, the life stories of people of our time and generally for all events with consequences... During those studies he drew up his theory of "epic drama."(41)

Having reached the objective causes of alienation, Brecht's strong desire for change was now being channelled in the direction of achieving that change. Marx's famous concluding statement in the "Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach," and his political slogan in the **Communist Manifesto:** "Workers of the world, unite" which expresses the philosophical and political solutions of the problem of alienation, were transformed by Brecht into a theatrical formula : the Lehrstück. At that time Brecht wrote about the presentation of political, economic, historical problems on the stage :

> Such matters aren't dramatic in our sense; and if one writes them up then they aren't true any longer, and the drama ceases to be anything of the sort; and as soon as one sees that the modern world is no longer reconcilable with the drama then the drama can no longer be reconciled with the world.(42)

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40. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** pp. 23-24.
41. **Ibid.,** p. 17.
42. **Ibid.**

The outcome of Brecht's studies was an alternative form of theatre, namely, the Lehrstück which is a piece of political education directed to the working class with the object of raising their political and social consciousness by explaining to them the state of their alienation as resulting from the capitalist mode of production and capitalist reified social relations.

Concerning the second issue of our argument, namely, the educative value of the Lehrstücke, it should be noted that the Lehrstücke are generally characterized by being utilitarian and practical. Their object is to achieve the purely practical result of organizing the proletariat into a class by spreading proletarian consciousness in a new proletarian art form. This is expressed by Brecht's statement : "The proof of the pudding is simply in the eating."(43) This statement, which later became a law governing Brecht's theatrical practice, was an idiomatic gloss used by Engels on Marx's Second Thesis on Feuerbach : "The question whether human thinking can pretend to objective truth is not a theoretical but a practical question. Man must prove the turth, i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of thinking in practice. This dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from proctice is a purely scholastic question."(44) This pudding, however, is the making of the proletariat into a class, the process bywhich its class consciousness becomes real in practice.

By building up and consolidating the class consciousness of the proletariat, Brecht wanted to participate in the act of strengthening the identity of the proletariat which can only exist as a class. According to Lukacs : "The historical knowledge of the proletariat begins with knowledge of the present. with the self-knowledge of its own social situation and with the elucidation of the necessity (i.e. its genesis)."(45) This

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43. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 19.
44. K. Marx and F. Engels, **op. cit.,** p. 62.
45. George Lukacs, **History and Class Consciousness** (London : Merlin Press, 1971), p. 159,

"historical knowledge" which Brecht gives to his audience through the Lehrstücke is man's alienation under capitalism. This knowledge implies the idea of changing that state of alienation by building up in the audience a sense of awareness of the problem and impelling them to think and act after leaving the theatre according to his interpretation and presentation of the probem and on grounds of the reality revealed to them. Brecht's vision of change in these plays comprises a total revolution against the forces of exploitation and oppression which are the concrete personification of capitalism. His intention is to pinpoint to his audience in concrete terms their situation i.e. of being exploited, and the philosophical and human, socio-political contents of that state and to reveal or expose also in concrete terms the philosophy of capitalism and its various forms, fascism and imperialism.

Brecht's treatment of the problem of alienation in the Lehrstücke is radical and concrete, radical in the sense that it grasps the problem at the root, and concrete in that it tackles alienation in concrete situations. This radical concreteness is achieved through a dialectical process in which he lays bare the contradictions between abstract ideas and concrete events. He then reaches a synthesis which is the outcome of the contradictions rendered on a higher plane of reality. This synthesis represents Brecht's world view and his idea of change in theory and praxis and his method of tackling reality. To sum up, through contradictions between the abstract and the concrete, theory and praxis, he reaches a general theory.

The general critical attitude that prevailed until recently (early seventies) towards the Lehrstücke was characterized by the view that they represent a phase in Brecht's thinking which was dominated by vulgar Marxism or idealistic materialism. This general view expressed a conviction that Brecht, in his transition from nihilistic rebellion to Marxism, did not yet have a firm grip on a genuine understanding of the materialist philosophy and that the Lehrstücke reflect a distorted praxis of his then idealistic interpretation of Marxism. According to these views, due to Brecht's pseudo-materialist approach, the Lehrstücke are dogmatic pieces of political propaganda and lack artistic value. It

was only in 1972 with the publication of Reiner Steinweg's major book entitled : **The Lehrstück, Brecht's Theory of Political-Aesthetic Education** (Das Lehrstück, Brecht's Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung)—which was preceded by the publication of Steinweg's discoveries in a concise essay in the literary periodical **Alternative** in 1971 under the title : "The Lehrstück—a model for the socialist theatre" (Das Lehrstück—ein Model hes sozialistischen Theaters")—that a new phase of Brechtian research and theatre praxis in the field of Brecht's Lehrstücke started. At the beginning of his study, Steinweg declares: "The Lehrstück, as type and foundation of a revolutionary pedagogical and theatrical praxis, has remained so far undiscovered."(46) This he tries to do by bringing out the major distinction between the essence of the Lehrstücke as opposed to that of the epic plays. The criterion according to which Steinweg distinguishes between the two types of theatre is the fact that the Lehrstücke are not plays written to be watched or read, but mainly to be performed by groups of young students, school children, workers and clerks through which they become socially and politically educated. Whereas in the epic plays—which are written and performed as traditional plays to be watched by an ordinary audience—the audience participation is dropped and with it the idea of art-as-production i.e. as a means of revolutionary praxis. The essence of the concept of the Lehrstücke is to dissolve the dichotomy between stage and auditorium, and player and spectator. This unity is achieved through the sublation of the dichotomy between the player and the spectator during the praxis of the play (i.e. technical praxis), and is intended to eliminate the intellectual dichotomy, as practised in bourgeois theatre, between philosophy and politics, through intellectual praxis. Brecht thinks that only through achieving a unity between the two can the theatre transform the spectator into a statesman. In this sense, the Lehrstück becomes a means of education. Steinweg mentions that when Brecht thought of an English translation of

46. "Das Lehrstück als Typus and als Grundlage einer revolutionären pädagogischen und theatralischen Praxis ist bisher unendeckt geblieben." R. Steinweg, "Das Lehrstück—ein Model des sozialistichen Theaters," **alternative** 78/79, 1979, p. 103.

the term Lehrstück in 1935 he wrote: "The nearest English equivalent I can find is the 'Learningplay.' "(47) This means that, in pedagogical terms, the Lehrstück implies a process of teaching-learning. The particular aim of this mutual process is the development of the participants' consciousness. That is, the Lehrstück in this sense is considered an exercise text (Uebungstext) to be practised in a process during which the participants exchange roles, criticize the text and change it. In this manner, they produce themselves in the text, change it and are changed by it. The praxis of the text, by acting as mediator between the participants and reality, produces a reaction upon their consciousness which is a revolutionizing, or /and the creation and development of their revolutionary consciousness i.e. proletarian consciousness of the masses which is necessary for the building up of a socialist society. In this sense, the Lehrstück's revolutionary / praxis nature serves as a means of a socio-political education of the masses. On the other hand, and according to Steinweg's thesis, the epic plays which represent a finished structure, by being built round a particular plot (Fabel) are closed and, hence, leave no room for alternatives. That is, whereas the epic plays can be seen as an expression of a Weltanschaung, in the sense of a closed world view, the Lehrstücke are a methodological starting point for the development of a dynamic, changing, open theatrical system. In **The Messingkauf Dialogues,** Brecht explains the distinction between Weltanschauung and method :

> It is important that you should understand the difference between Marxism, which recommends a particular way of looking at the world, and what is normally called **Weltanschauung** or outlook. Marxism posits certain methods of looking, certain predictions and suggestions for practical action. It teaches a combination of thinking and active intervention as a means of dealing with reality in so far as social intervention is able to deal with it. It is a doctrine that criticizes human action and expects in turn to be criticized by it. A true Weltanschauung, however, is a picture of the

47. R. Steinweg, **op. cit.,** p. 106.

world, a hypothetical knowledge of the way in which things happen, mostly moulded in accordance with some ideal of harmony.(48)

Within this distinction, the Lehrstücke can be considered as the praxis of the Marxian methodology. Through the process of practising the text, the participants are criticized by the text and also criticize it. In this manner, they learn about their own contradictions and the contradictions of the existing social conditions and, thus, are able to eliminate them in praxis. Hence, the praxis of the theory as dramatized in the text, is a criticism of the theory and a development of it.

The Lehrstück, by basing itself in concrete and changing social conditions and by relying upon the collective initiative of the masses as being the subjects of history, can be a socially and politically effective theatrical means. But in this sense, the only thing that a Lehrstück has in common with conventional theatre is, as Steinweg points out, the name 'theatre.' The specific revolutionary aspects of the Lehrstücke lies in the fact that they represent a radical alteration of the conventional concept of the theatre by making it a means of production which can be practised in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The theme which unifies the series of Lehrstücke is that of consent (Einverständniss) in the sense of the individual conformity with the dictates of the collective as represented by the party. In this sense, the Lehrstücke, which are a sequence of related didactic pieces, are intended for the praxis of the idea of consenting with the collective. Brecht's comment on **The Measures Taken** that it is an "exercise in dialectic"(49) means that by practising the text, the participants acquire an understanding of the laws of dialectics and can, thus, apply them to their own concrete situation. Hence, the participants would be initiated to change

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48. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 36.
49. Walter Weideli, **The Art of Bertolt Brecht,** trans. Daniel Russell (New York : New York University Press, 1963), p. 48.

society and control it proceeding from a real i.e. theory and praxis, knowledge of the movement of society and the causes of social injustice as well as the means of their elimination. Thus, the main objective of the Lehrstücke is social ond political consciousness. In this sense, they represent a positive action against the growing trend of fascism during the twenties of this century. Yet, their educative value can be preserved and practised at any time under the changing social conditions due to the revolutionary / praxis nature of their method.

In this connection, **The Measures Taken** represents a concrete example of the revolutionary theory / praxis method of the Lehrstücke. For one thing, that it has been actually performed by groups of workers (4000 workers participated in the porformance as Choruses conducted by Brecht and accompanied by the music of Hans Eisler in 1931) during which they strongly identified with the message of consenting with the collective. In this sense, the text proved to be an efffective means of socio-political education and revolutionary praxis and could, thus, be regarded as a model for the Lehrstücke. The other reason for the specific importance of **The Measures Taken** is that until today it remains Brecht's most controversial and widely misunderstood Lehrstück and as example of the critical misinterpretation of the Lehrstücke in general. Unlike the epic plays, **The Measures Taken** as a Lehrstück, does not present a complete argument but is rather an exercise in which all the participants have to interchange roles in order to be able to see the problem from all sides and reach a judgment. This is explained by Brecht in a last interview :

> **Die Massnahme (The Measures Taken)** is a didactic playlet to prove that four Communist agitators are justified in killing a fifth who is so full of sympathy for the oppressed coolies that instead of obeying orders and inciting them to rebel, he tries to help them. This brings him into the foreground, which exposes his comrades to danger... It could be considered as a moral question (i.e., the death of the young comrade), but not until you have taken part in the play and acted the part of the young comrade **and** one of the four agitators **and** a member

of the Control Chorus. Then you have seen it from every angle and only then may you judge.(50)

Despite Brecht's remarks on the play, **The Measures Taken,** has been and still is subject to acute misinterpretation by critics both from East and West. Reinhold Grimm, the famous German scholar and critic who is also an authority on Brecht, maintains that **The Measures Taken** is a petty bourgeois idealist tragedy :

> A man becomes inextricably entangled in a complex of two absolute values... He can never fulfil the one without violating the other. He must incur guilt, however he may decide. So death becomes the only solution for the irresoluble conflict.(51)

The same view is held by Roger Howard who contends that the attitude of the four agitators represents in a rudimentary, pre-revolutionary form, the dictatorship of the Party over the proletariat. Howard concludes that the postulation of the opposites. i.e. individual versus party, places the play within the boundaries of the determinism of Brecht's early plays because "the understanding of the agitators and the understanding of the young comrade are false—or non-material—opposites, since they are conceived in terms of ideas. They are idealist absolutes."(52) These views are expressive of the general critical attitude towards **The Measures Taken** which has relied for so long on the authority of Alfred Kurella, who maintains that :

> The central conflict of the play is not between the 'reason' of the agitators and the 'emotion' of the young comrade. It

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50. Brecht interviewed by Ronald Hayman, "A Last Interview with Brecht," **Declaration,** ed. Tom Mashler (New York : E.P. Dutton, 1958), p. 49.
51. R. Grimm, "Ideological Tragedy and Tragedy of Ideology," **Interpretation,** Vol. 2, 1965.
52. Roger Howard, "A Measure of **The Measures Taken :** Zenchiku, Brecht and Idealist Dialectics," **Praxis,** Vol. 3, 1976, p. 169.

> is between the two opposed types of reason-and-emotion combined... the absolute intellectual opposition between feeling and intellect by opposing on the one hand an action that was objectively fallacious—that is, harmful to the revolution—resulting from a predominance of feeling, with, on the other hand, a similar error, resulting from a predominance of intellect.... The conflict between reason and emotion is... the basic expedience of the bourgeois intellectual about to join the revolutionary proletariat. In its idealistic approach to the problem **(The Measures Taken)** is a typically bourgeois, intellectualist work.(53)

Although Howard disagrees with Kurella's analysis of the central conflict, both come to the same conclusion. Whether the conflict is between the combined "reason-and-emotion" of the four agitators and those of the young comrade as Kurella maintains, or between the two false, abstract ideas of both parties as Howard observes, both critics agree that Brecht produced a bourgeois tragedy due to his false postulation of the opposites, feeling and intellect. Howard claims that the conditions of material life are not represented in the play, hence the contradiction between the teachings of the classics as represented by the four agitators and the ideas of the young comrade remain on the level of ideas i.e. abstract idealism. However, it is not the conflict between the subjective understanding of both the four agitators and the young comrade of the tactics of revolution on the one hand, and objective reality on the other. Neither is the problem the absence of the objective factor represented by the material conditions of life. Objectivity is presented in the play in the concrete exposition of exploitation in scene three, with the coolies toiling hard on the bank of the rivers where the young comrade is sent to urge the coolies to demand shoes to protect them against slipping. In scene four, we are shown the workers' strike at the textile factory where the young comrade is ordered to distribute leaflets; and in scene five, in which exploitation is concretized in the character of the merchant and

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53. Alfred Kurella, "What Was He Killed For ?", **Literature of the World Revolution,** No. 5, 1931, p. 142.

is expressed in his song. All this confirms the existence of objective reality independent from thought i.e. the characters' idea of it. They also give in concrete terms the abstract concept of exploitation by revealing the concrete causes of alienation.

Contrary to the views of Kurella, Grimm and Howard, Steinweg mentions **The Measures Taken** as an example of the theory of productivity and the praxis of the Lehrstück theory, which he fully scrutinizes and analyses in the light of his interpretation of his reconstructed theory in another study entitled : **Die Massnahme.** Steinweg cites this play as an example because for one thing, as he states, it has been mentioned by Brecht a few hours before his death as a model for the theatre of the future.(54) The other is that **The Measures Taken** is a genuine model of a proletarian praxis of the Lehrstück theory. However, Steinweg does not particularly discuss alienation as being the central theme of the play.

In **The Measures Taken,** Brecht presents man's alienation under the capitalist mode of production through the Merchant whose main interest is profit-making. For him any product is only a means of profit. Brecht shows that those engaged in commercial exchange are totally alienated from one another and the product is likewise alienated from the man who puts it on the market. Thus, capitalism alienates man from his own products and it likewise alienates him from the very activity through which these products are produced i.e. from his surrounding environment and from other men. These abstract concepts are concretized in the character of the Merchant and in concrete situations which achieve an identification between content and form. In the Merchant's favourite song "The Song of Commodity," which is used as an A-effect, Brecht makes this point very strikingly:

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54. Reported by M. Wekwerth and cited by Steinweg in **Alternative, ed. cit.,** p. 102.

What is rice anyway ?
Do I know what rice is ?
How should I know who should know ?
All I know is its price.

What is Man anyway ?
Do I know what Man is
How should I know who should know ?
I don't know what Man is.
All I know is his price.(65)

In a world governed by commodity relations, the product controls the producer and objects are more powerful than man. They dominate him instead of being dominated by him. The product. the objectification of the producer, is directed against him and it denies his personality instead of affirming it. This is artistically expressed by the repetition of the first stanza in the last stanza by replacing rice with Man, thus establishing an identification between man and commodity and making them interchangeable. The solution of this alienation, as offered in the play, is the negation of the first negation, i.e. man's loss of identity and domination of commodity under capitalism, namely by man's self-affirmation through self-negation in the collective. This second negation, however, is different because it will liberate man from alienation. The solution, which is purely a political one, is materialized in the party. Hence, the party in all the Lehrstücke, and particularly in **The Measures Taken,** acts as the element of mediation necessary for realizing a changed and de-alienated reality.

Brecht's early metaphysical interpretation of alienation had led him to regard alienation as an uneliminable feature of human existence. The absence of a concrete element of mediation i.e. a material situation or another human being or a third party, in **The Jungle of the Cities,** had resulted in the fixation of alienation. Althoug the image of facelessness

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55. Brecht, **The Measures Taken and Other Lehrstücke** (London : Eyre Methuen, 1977), pp. 23-24.

mentioned in **The Jungle of the Cities,** recurs in the Lebrstücke but acquires a different and new function and content, the new function is qualitatively different from that of the early plays. **Whereas In the Jungle of the Cities** the image symbolizes the self-negation of the characters and their alienation from each other, in the new period it is a sign of their self-affirmation. The ambiguity of the masked faces in the early play is transformed into the simple and precise clarity of the suppression of individuality through class consciousness and party discipline. Thus the individual element is now crystallized in the party and the party discipline, founded on the submerging of the individuality, as an essential part of the revolutionary struggle for man's liberation from alienation. This will be realized by changing the disorder of class society and freeing the divided world from exploilation. According to this will to change the world, the Control Chorus state in the song entitled "Change the World : It Needs it" :

> With whom would the just man not sit
> To help justice ?
> What medicine is too bitter
> For the man who's dying ?
> What vileness should you not suffer to
> annihilate vileness ?
> If at last you could change the world, what
> Could make you too good to do so ?
> Who are you ?
> Sink in filth
> Embrace the butcher, but
> Change the world; It needs it.(56)

Thus, the question whether everything is permitted in the name of change (i.e. killing the young comrade), is not treated as an abstract moral problem, but as a political one. At the end of the play the four agitators insist that the death of the young comrade is not a verdict but a measure;

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56. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 25.

And so we decided; we now
Had to cut off a member of our own body.
It is a terrible thing to kill.
We would not only kill others, but ourselves as well, if the
need arose.
For violence is the only means whereby this deadly
World may be changed, as
Every living being knows,
And yet, we said
We are not permitted to kill. At one with the
Inflexible will to change the world, we formulated
The measures taken.(57)

Brecht's solution to the problem of individual and group could be interpreted : that which serves the victory of communism is moral, meaning that in the name of this cause all is permitted, that there are and can be no restrictions of a moral nature imposed here. This interpretation is justified by the approval of the Control Chorus of the measures taken by the four agitators to kill their fifth comrade when he was endangering their mission. Hence, the killing of the young comrade is a party (collective) political decision which conforms to objective reality, namely the danger to which the mission is subjected due to the idealistic and emotional behaviour of the young comrade. In this sense, the contradiction is presented as that between the ideology, i.e. false consciousness, of the individual (young comrade) and the real consciousness of the collective (four agitators), real because it is grounded on objective reality and proceeds from concrete socio-economic praxis.(58) This is expressed by the last words of the Control Chorus : "Taught only by reality can / Reality be changed."(59) The consent to the group which establishes the unity between the individual and the collective, is expressed by the four agitators to the young comrade :

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57. Brecht, **op. cit.,** pp. 32-33.
58. This argument is based on R. Steinweg's interpretation of the play in his essay "Brecht's **The Measures Taken**—Exercise text, not Tragedy" (Brechts 'Die Massnahme"—Uebungstext nicht Tragödie), **Alternative, ed. cit.,** pp. 133-143.
59. Brecht, **op. cit.,** pp. 34.

Show us the way which we are to go, and we
Will go that way with you, but
Do not go the right way without us
Without us it is
The wrong way.(60)

The young comrade's ideological attitude is expressed in his language which reflects his dogmatic way of thinking : "I sympathize with the revolution. The sight of injustice compelled me to become a frighter. Man must help Man. I support the cause of freedom. I believe in Humanity."(61) The young comrade's highly dogmatic language, which proves his ideological fanaticism, shows that his consent with the group before the starting of the journey has been a false consent because it is based on ignorance and self-esteem. Because he acts and thinks undialectically, he separates emotion from reason and is primarily guided by emotion, which brings about his tragic end. The extreme attitude of the young comrade is intended as an A-effect to alienate his alienated consciousness i.e. separation of emotion and reason and theory and praxis, with the aim of criticizing and changing it.(62) In this way, Brecht's art conforms to his politics. That is, the young comrade's idealistic, subjectively ideological way of thinking expressed in his dogmatic language, prove to be counter-revolutionary because his false consciousness is in contradiction with the economic and political conditions due to his negative social praxis. The young comrade's attitude and behaviour also prove that to be too radical is to achieve nothing radical at all. The negative praxis of the young comrade is due to his uncritical, abstract ideology which makes Marxism for him an ideology (in the sense of dogma) and not a theory-praxis method. In this sense, the play presents Brecht's critique of false ideology in the sense of abstract, absolute thought extricated from concrete socio-economic reality. That is why he describes the play, as previously mentioned, aa an attempt to prove that the four agitators are

60. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 28.
61. **Ibid.,** p. 10.
62. R. Steinweg, **op. cit.,** pp. 138-139.

justified in killing a fifth. R. Steinweg observes that Brecht wrote **The Measures Taken** under the influence of Lenin's essay "Left-Wing Communism, an infantile disease," which appeared in a German translation in 1931, according to which he modelled the role of the young comrade and relying on the characteristics of radicalism mentioned by Lenin.(63) In this sense, Brecht's intention in this play, is to show that extreme radicalism does not achieve anything at all because, as seen throughout the play, it becomes a dangerous weakness and an obstacle in the way of real revolution. Hence, the objective of this Lehstück is, as Steinweg maintains, that the participants—by practicing all the roles in the play—can learn to distinguish between false and real consciousness and the conditions implied in both in order to be able to prevent such tragic situations and, hence, to apply this knowledge in their political work.(64)

During his exile (1933-47), Brecht produced his generally called great plays which include **The Life of Galileo** (1st version 1938, 2nd version 1947 in collaboration with Charles Laughton), **Mother Courage and Her Children** (1938-39), **The Good Person of Setzuan** (1938), **Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti** (1940), **The Caucasian Chalk Circle** (1944). The unifying theme in these plays is alienation, which is dramatically presented through the contradiction between individual and society as reflected in the divided characters, and carried out in a series of Brechtian interpretations of alienation by a number of alter ego confrontations. These confrontations take place on various levels, each reflecting a new and different plane of consciousness. However, Brecht's treatment of alienation through the problem of the individual versus society is qualitatively different from that in the Lehrstücke. In the new phase, by reverting to subjectivity, he moves to the objective and, hence, enriches the social aspect and his social outlook. The reduction from subject to object enriches subjectivity and reveals new subjective dimensions in the human nature. Although the new, higher period

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63. R. Steinweg, **op. cit.,** pp. 137-138.
64. **Ibid.,** p. 139.

regresents a regression to the individual, this regression is for the sake of further progression. In this stage, the individual is dealt with on a new level; it is neither the purely personal and psychological, nor the one-sidedly social. The new phase combines both, but differs qualitatively because it occurs on a higher level of consciousness. The elevation of consciousness is a question that is determined by the nature of the phase. The subjective factor which was undermined in the Lehrstücke, is now made prominent. In the didactic phase, Brecht was concerned with the revelation of the dangers of capitalism and its mode of production as being the direct cause of alienation. In the new phase, the content is different though the object is still the same, namely the elimination of all forms of exploitation which produce alienation and which are the result of capitalism. Hence, the new phase is a new synthesis which presents the contradiction between the individual and society. Because the level of the contradiction is higher, the substance of the struggle is different. It presents, in a spiral way, the problem of consciousness as the conscicusness of self through the other i.e. other individuals and social forces. In this sense, man attains social and self-consciousness with the help of the other and in spite of him. Therefore, all the later plays are in substance philosophical drama. In this connection, it is important to note that Brecht's thought and art should not be approached as non-progressive i.e. as mere presentation of many facets of life that co-exist, nor should they be tackled in a straight line with regard to his presentation of the various problems. The main issue in Brecht's theatre is presented in terms of the pivotal idea round which other issues move in a spiral. The proposed issues in the lower or minimum level (early plays) are different qualitatively from those in the higher (later plays). The development reveals the unity of Brecht's thought and art in their varying levels, that is, progressive unity through variety incarnated in the problem of alienation and consciousness.

The treatment of alienation in the late plays elevates them to the level of historical alienation or alienated history in relation to consciousness as a solution to the problem, and as the only way of bringing about liberation from alienation and establishing a free, humanized and de-

alienated history. This is done by treating the individual and the masses as the subjects of history rather than as its objects which is the case in bourgeois societies and which is, according to Brecht, a sign of alienated consciousness nurtured by capitalism. Brecht's understanding of history derives from historical and dialectical materialism as proclaimed by Marx in **The Holy Family**:

> History does nothing, it 'possesses **no** immense wealth', it 'wages **no** battles'. It is **man,** real living man, that does all that, that possesses and fights; 'history' is not a person apart. using man as means for its own particular aims; history is **nothing** but the activity of man pursuing his aims.(65)

Brecht's understanding of history, as formulated in paragraph 38 of "The Short Organum For The Theatre" is: "The 'historical conditions' must of course not be imagined (nor will they be so constructed) as mysterious Powers (in the background); on the contrary, they are created and maintained by men (and will in due course be altered by them)."(66) Such philosophy of history views history as the emergence and development of human consciousness from alienation towards man's liberation from alienation through man's activity rather than either an "accumulation of accidents, of the deeds of great men, or as a process of constantly recurring ebbs and tides, an eternally self-repeating pattern—(or) as the work of mysterious forces..."(67)

History, being one of man's products, is necessarily alienated as a result of the mode of production i.e. private property and division of labour. Brecht's view of history is in accordance with this historical materialism, using the problem of alienation as a point of departure. Writing about "historicization" as a crucial technical device, Brecht equates alienation (Verfremdung) and historicization (Historisierung):

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65. K. Marx, ed. Ernst Fischer and Bostock, **op. cit.,** p. 81.
66. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 190.
67. K. Marx, **op. cit.,** p. 82.

> The actor must play the incidents as historical ones. Historical incidents are unique, transitory incidents associated with particular periods. The conduct of the persons involved in them is not fixed and 'universally human'; it includes elements that have been or may be overtaken by the course of history, and is subject to criticism from the immediately following period's point of view. The conduct of those born before us is alienated from us by an incessant evolution.(68)

This treatment of historicizing drama or bringing drama to the level of history, is a way of bridging the gap that since Aristotle had alienated both activities by setting history in direct antithesis with drama. According to Aristotle :

> The difference between the historian and the poet is not that the one writes in prose and the other in verse; ...The difference is that one tells of what has happened, the other of the kinds of things that might happen. For this reason poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for while poetry is concerned with universal truths, history treats of particular facts. By universal facts are to be unerstood the kinds of things a certain type of person will probably or necessarily say or do in a given siatution.(69)

Brecht does not accept Aristotle's view of history which in the time of Herodot and Plutarch had not yet evolved as a science governed by laws, but was rather a biographic description of events and personalities. Brecht also objects to the unique value of art, believing that like everything else it is transitory. Neither does he accept the idea of human nature and human behaviour being eternal and fixed. Human nature, according to Brecht, is not absolute; it is conditional, transitory, changing and changeable as a result of the dialectical relation between historical conditions and man's activity in accordance with his consciousness. This is explained in "The Short Organum" :

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68. Brecht, trans. J. Willet, **op. cit.,** p. 140.
69. Aristotle, "On the Art of Poetry," trans. T.S. Dorsch, **Classical Literary Criticism** (London : Penguin, 1975), pp. 43-44.

> The field has to be defined in historically relevant terms. In other words, we must drop our habit of taking the different social structures of past periods, and then stripping them of everything that makes them different; so that they all look more or less like our own, which then acquires from this process a certain air of having been there all along, in other words of permanence pure and simple. Instead we must leave them their distinguishing marks and keep their impermanence always before our eyes, so that our own period can be seen to be impermanent too.(70)

The reason of this essential difference between Aristotle's and Brecht's understanding of history lies in the difference between the attitude of each to the social function of the theatre. By absolutizing poetry, i.e. literature, Aristotle denies it any capacity to influence reality. For him, literature stands in isolation from reality and is therefore alienated from reality. It represents relations between beings with the intention of fixing the present alienated condition of man instead of surpassing it. Having overlooked consciousness as an important element in the social function of drama, Aristotle concentrates on harmonizing people's emotions, reconciling them to their lot and fixing the social conditions after turning them into an absolute. As a result, the spectactor becomes a passive, powerless (i.e. alienated) adaptable creature. On the other hand, the social function of Brecht's theatre is the "representation of reality with a view to influencing it."(71) The end in view of Brecht's "historicizing" is the evolution of consciousness and transcedence of reality. The reference point of history and consciousness is man's alienation and the movement towards de-alienation. Brecht's view of history gives the spectator the 'chance to criticize human behaviour from a social point of view."(72) The same applies to the treatment of contemporary themes, as explained by Brecht in paragraph 37 of "The Short Organum for the Theatre" : "And if we play words dealing with our own time as though

70. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 190.
71. **Ibid.,** p. 225.
72. **Ibid.,** p. 86.

they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which he (the spectactor) himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins."(73) For Brecht, history is not the mere description of facts as much as the critical discovery of relations. Such an activity requires the interference of the human mind which constitutes the subjective factor in interpreting history. The subjective factor dictates the writer's interpretation of a certain historical theme. This interpretation is a recreation of history with a futuristic vision. Objectivity plays a part in the formation of the author's thought and serves to present a historical figure or event in a contemporary view. Thus, Brecht's contemporary interpretation of alienation makes use of historical characters and events in order to justify his criticism of contemporary history. That is, he interprets past events through an awareness of the problem of alienation in contemporary society. His intention behind this interpretation of past events is to free history from alienation. This is done when man creates history through his futuristic vision, proceeding from an awareness of the transitoriness and changeability of history as well as his ability to bring about that change. If we sever man from history i.e. make him history's object instead of its subject, alienation results because history is the product of man. The remedy for man's alienation from his product, which is history, is to remove man's alienation from history by interpreting history through a future framework with the object of changing and controlling it. In this way man enters into the path of history, moves within it and with it.

Turning to Brecht's first creation in exile, **The Life of Galileo** (2nd version 1947 in collaboration with Charles Laughton), a consideration of the question of how far Brecht's Galileo is alienated from the historical Galileo will be first discussed. This question should be answered through another one which is the formulation of the problem that faced both figures, namely whether the historical Galileo was against religion or against authority as represented by the Church. Brecht asserts that the

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73. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.**, p. 190.

historical Galileo was not against religion, nor against an abstract authority, but against a specific kind of authority, namely that of the Catholic Church and the feudalist system. In his notes to the play, Brecht warns that :

> ...it would be highly dangerous, particularly nowadays, to treat a matter like Galileo's fight for freedom of research as a religious one; for thereby attention would be most unhappily deflected from present-day reactionary authorities of a totally unecclesiastical kind... In the present play **(Galileo)** the Church functions, even when it opposes free research, simply as Authority... as types. the dignitaries of the Church should resemble our present-day bankers and senators.(74)

Brecht's Galileo corresponds to the historical Galileo in that he never turns directly against the Church. In this sense, the Brechtian Galileo is historically authentic to Galileo in his basic position towards the problem of freedom of research. Brecht's Galileo, however, is in a more privileged and higher position because he incorporates the experience of the 400 years that separate and yet unite the Middle Ages and the Twentieth Century; the unifying element should be seen through the phenomenon of alienation.

The first version of **The Life of Galileo** (1938) which predates the atomic bomb, shows Brecht's fascination with the science of the "new age" and the predominance of reason over superstition, and does not insist on the social responsibility of the scientist. After his recantation, Galileo completes his "Discorsi" which is smuggled across the borders by his disciple Andreas Sarti and, hence, the recantation is justified since it allows for the continuation of Galileo's work which is of great value to humanity. At the end, the blind Galileo confirms his belief that reason has not come to an end but is only beginning. In the second

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74. Brecht, **The Life of Galileo,** trans. Desmond Vesney (London, Methuen, 1968), pp. 12-14.

version, considering the changing socio-political conditions, the total destruction of Hiroshima and Nagazaki by the atom bomb which Brecht considers as the ultimate development of Galileo's discoveries due to his negative social position, Brecht makes Galileo condemn his own position:

> If only I had resisted, if only the natural scientists had been able to evolve something like the Hippocractic oath of the doctors, the vow to devote their knowledge wholly to the benefit of mankind. As things now stand, the best one can hope for is for a race of inventive dwarfs who can be hired for anything.(75)

It is also from this angle, that Brecht condemns Galileo's crime.

To answer the question why should Brecht regard Galileo as a criminal, we would have to consider the problem of the moral responsibility of the scientist towards society. Although Brecht calls Galileo openly a criminal, he neither condemns nor praises him. He clarifies his position towards him :

> The fact is that Galileo enriched astronomy and physics by simultaneously robbing these sciences of a greater part of their social importance... Galileo's crime can be regarded as the 'original sin' of modern natural sciences... He raises his telescope to the stars and delivers himself to the rack. In the end he indulges his science like a vice, secretly and probably with pangs of conscience. Confronted with such a situation, one can scarcely wish only to praise or only to condemn Galileo.(76)

What separates and yet unites both figures i.e. the historical and Brecht's Galileo, is the alienation that both suffered under totally different social structures. At the beginning of the rise of natural sciences which accompanied the rise of the bourgeoisie, these sciences worked

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75. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 118.
76. **Ibid.,** pp. 9-10.

towards progres by serving the interests of the new rising class. However, with the evolution of the bourgeoisie, this progress proved to be harmful to humanity because it marked only a "swing and not a revolution."(77) Due to the bourgeois conception of the freedom of research and the scientist's independence from society, the new astronomy was used by the ruling class as an instrument to be directed against humanity. By its very purity and its indifference to modes of production, the natural sciences developed in a direction that proved disastrous to humanity. The idea that science has but one goal—the search for truth—is also a manifestation of alienated consciousness for, as Galileo says: "Truth will triumph only in so far as we triumph; the victory of reason can only be the victory of reasonable people."(78)

The contradiction between the individual and society is posed by the contradiction between conscience and reason that sums up the moral dilemma of the scientist. The solution of this contradiction lies in the social function of science and the social and moral responsibility of the scientist as a man mastering his fate in the act of socializing science, i.e. making it in the service of man. This implies changing society radically, for the goal of the socialization of science is to remove man's alienation and above all his alienation from science. Without the socialization of science which means the progress of society, the antinomy between science and society remains and any triumph for science will be bought at the expense of society. The fact that in an alienated society, science breeds its opposite, ignorance and superstition, is conveyed by the last scene (15) which is an indirect answer to Galileo's words: "I cannot calculate the paths of freely moving bodies in such a way as to explain the rides of witches upon broomsticks."(79) This is exactly what happenh in the end as a result of Galileo' relinquishing of his moral responsibility towards society, in that case, the masses who need the new science. Andrea's explanation to the three children who

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77. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 10.
78. **Ibid.,** p. 70.
79. **Ibid.,**

represent the future generation and who still believe in witchcraft and superstition, to their question about witches flying through the air on broomsticks: "You must learn to open your eyes,"(80) shows that this generation has not yet learned the simplest principle of science : observation. Science does not serve them because as Galileo admits: "... if they never stir themselves and start to think, the most beautiful irrigation schemes will be of no use to them."(81) In this way, Galileo frees himself from any social responsibility towards the masses of the future. Here, we have the role played by the alienated society in changing the scientist from a man conscious of himself and his identity into an alienated being. The society uses a method of coercion (in Galileo's case the Inquisition and the threat of physical torture) by which it terrorizes the scientist or anyone who tries to break or alter its system. Galileo's discovery that the earth is not the centre of the universe, proceeding from the teachings of Copernicus, but one of the many planets orbiting the sun, abolishes the idea of heaven. Hence, the danger which Galileo's science represents to the ecclesiastical and feudal authorities is that the masses, by recognizing the correspondence between celestical mobility and social mobility and by accepting that in physics there is no heaven up and earth down, will reject the idea of having in society masters at the top and slaves at the bottom of the social structure. Therefore, Galileo's discovery that the earth is not he centre of the universe and that it revolves around the sun is accepted by the church but the teachings of Copernicus are put on the Index. The authorities are not concerned about the scientific validity of Galileo's work, but about whether his teachings are helpful or harmful to the ruling classes. Hence, the reason upon which Galileo has drawn up his teachings, is seen as a danger to the power structure of the church and the feudal system because it could incite the masses to a new way of thinking towards society. In this sense, science is accepted by authority as long as it remains a means to maintain and preserve the absolute. This absolute represents the interests of the ruling

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80. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 122.
81. **Ibid.,** p. 79.

class which adapts science to reality within the limits of authority. Thus, science is adapted to reality instead of becoming a means to change it. Hence, reducing science to a fetish, a dogma and an absolute which, consequently, turns it into an alienated science through authority.

Galileo's method of reacting against the alienated society is to solve the contradiction between the individual and society, of which he is well aware, individually i.e. by standing on the side of the ruling class. However, by solving this contradiction through his capitulation to the ruling powers of the present, he sets himself in contradiction with the masses, the ruling powers of the future. In this way, Galileo becomes a traitor to science and society, and his recantation is not—as in the early version—weighed against his scientific work. This time, his recantation outweights his scientific achievement because it stands in the way of historical progress.

By solving the contradiction of individual / society individually, Galileo emerges as a hero. However, the phenomenon of the hero points to a contradiction between the hero and the masses, for the very fact that he is a hero means that he cuts himself off from the masses. Having separated himself from the masses and placed himself above them, he alienates himself from the masses and alienates the masses from him r an individual who is a social being and who can only realize this state collectively i.e. among the masses. Thus, this alienates him from his species and from society. According to Brecht, the herc falls into a contradiction, the elimination of which necessitates the emergence of a new social order which does not breed heroes, a society in which individuals act in consistent accordance with the rest of society. In this case, the contradiction would exist only between society and nature. Galileo was involved in a double contradiction : with society and with nature. His contradiction with society was stifling his research because it was stronger than his contradiction with nature. Therefore, to conquer nature we would have to eliminate the contradiction between scientist and society so that everyone can freely control and harness nature for his prosperity which will then be in harmony with that of the society. The elimination

of the contradiction between hero and society is expressed in the two statements:

> **Andrea:** Unhappy the land that has no heroes.
> **Galileo:** No. Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes.(82)

This means that within a new social order, there would be no distinguishing factors between individuals, hence the emergence of a distinct or unique phenomenon as that of the hero would be impossible. Brecht believes that humanity would be far more happy without heroes, for the disappearance of heroes (alienated beings production of alienated humanity) is a sign of happiness. If the society in which Galileo lived was scientific in spirit and did not terrorize scientits nor condemn scientific thought, Galileo would have been one of thousands of creative scientits. But Galileo is now placed in history as the hero of the Middle Ages. His heroism reveals the disintegration of his society, whereas if society was scientific there would be no necessity for someone to reveal the defects of society and he would be himself an expression of the positive aspects of that society.

Although Brecht concentrates on the hero rather than on historical events which he presents through the hero, the play represents a unity between the unique (hero) and the universal (law). The hero as an individual is a unique model, and the universal relies on laws or general rules. In Galileo's case heroism is the result of immaturity of society as well as immaturity on the part of the hero. In other words, the hero has the illusion that he can control the movement of history and that the subjective factor determines and governs the objective factors. At the same time, society is unable to move collectively through the hero. Hence, the alienation of both hero and society is an inevitable consequence.

The structure of **The Life of Galileo** reflects the play's basic "gestus," which represents Brecht's dramatic treatment of his stance towards the

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82. Brecht, **op. cit.,** pp. 107-108.

problem of the social function of science. The negative social aspects of the "new science" which emerged with the rise of the bourgeois class is expressed by Brecht in "The Short Organum For the Theatre" (paragraph 17), which can be read as Brecht's own comment on **The Life of Galileo** as well as his formulation of the basic "gestus" of the play :

> The reason why the new way of thinking and feeling has not yet penetrated the great mass of men is that the sciences, for all their success in exploiting and dominating nature, have been stopped by the class which they brought to power—the bourgeoisie—from operating in another field where darkness still reigns, namely that of the relations which people have to one another during the exploiting and dominating process. This business on which all alike depended was performed without the new intellectual methods that made it possible ever illuminating the mutual relationships of the people who carried it out. The new approach to nature was not applied to society.(83)

The Life of Galileo is the only one among Brecht's epic plays in which he uses very limited alienation effects, such as choruses, narrative comments, direct addresses to the audience, which are abundantly employed in other epic plays. In his valuable essay, Ernst Schumacher remarks about the technical structure of **The Life of Galileo :**

> Brecht regarded **Galileo** as a play with "restricted" alienation effects, but its extremely powerful dialectic shaped its internal structure, the arrangement and interrelation of the scenes, the characterization, and the language... the play shows that the dialectic can be a major factor in the aesthetic value of any play. The overall structure of the play demonstrates this; it expresses not only antitheses but their coherence as well. It makes possible the illustration of contradiction rather than of contrast. It is not content with merely an "either-or", but must include the "this-as-well-as-that" : not merely a "this-is-the-way", but also a "this-is-not-the-way", an "otherwise". It

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83. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 184.

> does not merely set negative against positive, but also shows their unity.(84)

The dialectical content and structure of **The Life of Galileo** may be regarded as the culmination of Brecht's dramatic maturity. In the early fifties, few years after **The Life of Galileo,** Brecht thought of changing from "epic" to "dialectical" theatre. His later theory of a "dialectical theatre" which he drew up in 1947 in the Appendices to "The Short Organum" (the same year he wrote **The Life of Galileo),** included ideas that had been formulated in his 1931 essay "Dialectical Dramatics" namely on the necessity of dialectics in modern scientific theatre for modern purposes. The "dialectical theatre," according to Brecht, was to keep the narrative element of the "epic," but had the distinct function of making dialectics in the theatre enjoyable.(85) In this sense, alienation technique should be used to present the contradictions and development in reality according to the laws of dialectics and to make dialectic a means of instruction as well as entertainment. Brecht's formulation of this theory is contained in the

Appendices to "The Short Organum for the Theatre" :

> The theatre of the scientific age is in a position to make dialectics into a source of enjoyment. The unexpectedness of logically progressive or zigzag development, the instability of circumstance, the joke of contradiction and so forth : all these are ways of enjoying the liveliness of men, things and processes, and they heighten both our capacity for life and our pleasure in it. Every art contributes to the greatest art of all, the art of living.(86)

The dialectical structure of **The Life of Galileo,** which conveys Brecht's

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84. Ernst Schumacher, "The Dialectics of **Galileo,"** trans. Joachim Neugroschel, **Tulane Drama Review,** Vol. 12, No. 2, 1968, pp. 124-125.
85. **Ibid.,** p. 127.
86. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 277.

critique of Galileo's position, consists in the contradiction between the elements of the play as well as their unity, that is, between scenes, characters and situations. Examples of presentation of scenes as "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" as Schumacher describes, it are in the antithesis of scene 2 in which Galileo is honoured at the Venetian court for his supposedly invented telescope by the authorities which make it impossible for him to continue his research, and scene 4 in which Galileo is confronted with contempt and disbelief at the same court on which he hoped to rely as a scientist. Another antithesis is presented between scene 6, in which the Vatican's Institute of Research confirms Galileo's discoveries, and scene 7 in which the Inquisition puts the Copernican doctrine on the Index; scene 10 (carnival scene) which shows the spreading of Galileo's teachings among the masses, and scene 12 in which Galileo is abandoned by the Grand Duke on whom he depended more than on the masses. The antithesis between Galileo's recantation and its effect on his disciples, is achieved by retarding the announcement of the recantation. This retardation creates a tension which is solved by the reversal in scene 13, with the sound of bells and the public reading of the recantation. The effect of this dialectical reversal is to show how Galileo is changed beyond recognition. Galileo's radical alteration is brought out in his confrontation with the disciple Andrea and is expressed in one of Galileo's self-verdict statements : "Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes." Here the scene clarifies the theme of the scientist's responsibility towards the social function of his science.

The dialectical structure is not only carried out in external balancing of scenes, but it also determines the internal balance of each individual scene to make it correspond and relate to that of other scenes. In the opening scene it is morning, which expresses the beginning of a new era, and in Galileo's room the bed is being made. In scene 14 (before last) it is evening, the end of a day as well as the end of a whole epoch and its ideals, and Galileo's bed is being prepared for the night. In the opening scene Galileo teaches Andrea, the child, a lesson about nature, and in scene 14 Galileo teaches the grownup Andrew a lesson about society. Every time the teacher is the same, yet totally different each

time. The pupil, likewise, is both the same and a different person. Schumacher recognizes the dialectical composition of **The Life of Galileo** and its symmetrical structure as a characteristic of the play's conventional nature:

> Symmetry is an essential aspect of classical drama. In **Galileo,** symmetry as a dramatic structural element underlines the "conservative" nature of the play... But analysis shows that it also helps express the dialectics immanent in the protagonist's life...(87)

Contrary to this view, is Althusser's which describes the play's structure as "asymmetrical" and recognizes the play's dialectical structure to be a reflection of the problem of the dialectics of consciousness rather than of those of the protagonist's life. Althusser maintains that the principal aim of **Galileo** is to produce a critique of the spontaneous ideology in which men live. Therefore, the play excludes the classical aesthetic of ideological consciousness (i.e. identification) or the consciousness of self. According to Althusser, the consciousness of the characters in the play is not presented as self-consciousness for no character contains in himself the totality of the play's conditions. For him the consciousness of self is an image of the ideological consciousness which includes the whole world of morals, politics, religion, etc., and which is according to Althusser, one of the myths. Hence, since the object of the play is the demystification of the consciousness of self, the play, as a structure, has no centre. It is decentered and its structure is asymmerical so long as the play cannot be reduced to a single or a number of characters and their relations. Althusser describes the play's structure :

> ...a latent asymmetrical-critical structure, the dialectic-in-the-wings, structure found in ...the structure of plays such as **Mother Courage** and (above all) **Galileo**... The dynamic of this specific latent structure... is the basis for a true critique of the false dialectic (conflict, tragedy, etc.) ...thus, in **Galileo**

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87. E. Schumacher, **op. cit.,** p. 128.

> the history that is slower than consciousness... it is not the words that produce this critique, but the internal balances of forces between elements of the play's structure... For him (Brecht) no character consciously contains in himself the totality of the tragedy's conditions. For him, the total, transparent consciousness of self, the mirror of the whole drama is never anything but an image of the ideological consciousness, which does include the whole world in its own tragedy, save only that this whole is merely the world of morals, politics and religion... In this sense these plays are decentred precisely because they can have no centre, because although the illusion-wrapped, naive consciousness is starting-point, Brecht refuses to make it that centre of the world it would like to be. That is why in these plays the centre is always to one side, if I may put it that way...(88)

This "latent asymmetrical structure" which is, according to Althusser, the the basis of the play's dialectics which represents a true critique of the false consciousness with its false dialectic or "illusion of consciousness," can be considered as a formulation of the play's basic "gestus." This "gestus" conveys both thematically and structurally the problem of consciousness (social responsibility) and its possible solution. Both problem and solution are produced by the internal dialectical balances of the play's structural elements, or what Althusser calls "the dynamic structure... (which) at once criticizes the illusion of consciousness and unravels its contradictions."(89)

Instead of using alienation effects to comment on Galileo's position this is mediated through Galileo's own remarks which represent his own verdicts on himself, as well as through the comments of the other characters. In scene 9 Galileo throws one of his pupils, Mucius, out of his house because the latter denies the teaching of Copernicus, and in scene

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88. Louis Althusser, **For Marx,** trans. Ben Brewster (London : NLB, 1969), p. 142-145.
89. **Ibid.,** p. 145.

13 before Galileo's recantation is announced, Andrea repeats the same argument Galileo used with Mucius: "He who does not know the truth is merely an idiot, but he who knows it and calls it a lie, is a criminal."(90) This at once establishes the link between both scenes and indirectly comments on Galileo's position by condemning it. Galileo's final analysis sums up the entire process of the play and alienates the whole problem of the scientists' historic responsibility towards science and society :

> During my free hours, of which I have many, I have gone over my case and have considered how the world of science, in which I no longer count myself, will judge it... These selfish and violent men, who greedily exploited the fruits of science to their own use, simultaneously felt the cold eye of science turned on a thousand-year-old, but artificial misery which clearly could be eliminated by eliminating them. They drenched us with their threats and bribes, irresistible to weak souls. But could we deny ourselves to the crowd and still remain scientists ?(91)

Condemning his own position, Galileo simultaneously condemns the new rising class with the question of social responsibility. Therefore, Galileo's judgement on the past should serve the present. He judges his own betrayal and recognizes the necessity—which is conveyed to the audience as a duty—that the individual in a class society should not capitulate to the rulers but carry on the struggle until the end. Hence, Galileo points to the means of solving the individual / society contradiction (i.e. consciousness of social responsibility) by offering a new development of productive forces which will replace the old ones and which will be oriented to the progressive forces in society. The new forces will solve the contradiction positively, which Galileo had solved negatively by stepping on the side of the authority and abandoning the masses. The masses will make use of Galileo's revolutionary theory by realizing it in praxis,

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90. Brecht, **op. cit.**, p. 145.
91. **Ibid.**, p. 117.

something which he failed to achieve. The new scientific knowledge which Galileo achieved will be put in the service of the masses. Hence, Galileo, the creator of new productive means which he then hindred from being socially realized by his treason, will be delivered by the new productive forces within new social relations.

The problem of consciousness recurs in Brecht's next play **Mother Courage and Her Children,** but is treated on a different level and with new dimensions. Whereas Galileo's problem represents the individual scientist's responsibility toward society and history, **Mother Courage** represents the false consciousness of the ignorant masses who never learn from their experience because they have been reduced to history's objects and cannot, therefore, fulfil their responsibility towards history i.e. changing it. In his notes to the play, Brecht writes: "...the question of choice of artistic means can only be that of how we playwrights give a social stimulus to our audience."(92) In other words, the artistic devices should be used in a way to raise the consciousness of the audience to the historical significance of the social changes. Therefore, when Brecht describes **Mother Courage** as a "Chronicle," he uses the word in the sense of "history" which does not present plain, hard facts :

> The chronicle play **Mother Courage and her Children**—with the term 'chronicle' corresponds roughly to that of 'history' in Elizabethan drama—does not of course represent any kind of attempt to persuade anybody of anything by setting forth bare facts... It is however necessary that chronicles should include a factual element, i.e. should be realistic... As for the chronicle in question, I don't believe that it leaves the audience in a state of objectivity (i.e. dispassionately balancing pros and cons). I believe rather—or let's say I hope—that it makes them critical.(93)

What Brecht means by realistic elements is the presentation of the small

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92. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 229.
93. **Ibid.,** p. 226.

or the unwritten history of the masses in their everyday life rather than the great written history of kings and emperors. For he wants to Show the masses that the people who are considered small by traditional historians and are, therefore, dismissed from their chronicles, can produce history as great as that of kings and emperors. Therefore, like Aristotle, Brecht is concerned with the presentation of the quality of past events rather than plain, hard facts, that is, with substance not accidents. But, unlike Aristotle, Brecht sees the nature of such quality in a different way, namely, through historical materialism which considers history a science that studies the motion of history rather than the documentation of biographical facts:

> That doctrine (Marxism) deals above all with the behaviour of great masses of people. The laws it propounds apply to the movement of large human units, and although it has a good deal to say about the individual's position within those units this refers normally only to the relations between those masses and the relations between those masses and the individual. But in our demonstrations we'd be more concerned with the behaviour of individuals to one another. However, the main principles of the doctrine are also a great help in judging the indiviual; for instance the principle that people's consciousness depends on their social existence is continually developing and that their consciousness is accordingly changing all the time. A lot of well-known principles are ruled out, such as 'it's all a matter of money', and 'history is made by great men', and 'two and two makes four'. Nor is there any question of another equally well-worn lot of principles replacing them.(94)

In this sense, Brecht alienates the alienated consciousness of the individual which has produced an alienated history that is unaware or itself. Hence, to present the laws of historical materialism in relation to the problem of the individual as the representative of the masses in **Mother Courage,**

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94. Baecht, **The Messingkauf Dialogues,** trans. John Willet (London Eyre Methuen, 1977), p. 35.

Brecht chooses a particular social class through which he presents his view of history. Consequently,

> No historically authenticated character is in fact allowed onto the stage : the historian's heroes are kept in the wings, and the stage is dominated by an indestructible camp-follower and her more vulnerable children, a cynical padre, a scoundrelly cook, a whore, a recruiting sergeant and an amorphous mass of symbolically anonymous peasants and troopers.(95)

Hence, Brecht presents the quality of things past through the consciousness of the anonymous masses whom he considers as the real makers of history. He treats their evolution from unconsciousness to consciousness of the fact of their alienation and their irreversible, but unrecognized power to control and guide history towards a de-alienated and humanized future. To become conscious of the fact that they are makers of history, the masses have to know the causes of their misery before they emerge into consciousness and start taking action towards liberating themselves from such a condition. Having liberated themselves from alienation, the masses become then the subject of history through their the consciousness of the causes of alienation which implies a knowledge of the movement of history.

The problem of consciousness and the movement of history is related to a particular theme which dominated the exile-period plays, namely, war. It was almost like an organized campaign which Brecht launched against war and which started with **Mother Courage and Her Children** (1938). Being a chronicle of the Thirty Years War that plagued Europe between 1618-1648, it treats war as one of man's activities incorporated in history. Marx drew attention to the war and its relation to social division of labour and the institution of private property :

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95. Keith Dickson, "History, Drama and Brecht's Chronicle of the Thirty Years War," **Forum for Modern Languages Studies** (Vol. VI, No. 3, July, 1970), p. 38.

> **War** is among the original labours of each of these primitive communities, both for the maintainance of property and for its acquisition... if man is conquered along with land as being its organic accessory, he is conquered as one of the conditions of production, and this gives rise to slavery and serfdom, which soon falsify and change the original form of any community and become the basis for a new form.(96)

Brecht endorses this view by his penetrating remark : "The Thirty Years War is one of the first giant wars which capitalism brought upon Europe."(97) Under the subtitle "What is a performance of **Mother Courage and Her Children** primarily meant to show ?," taken from **"The Mother Courage Model,"** Brecht states :

> ...in wartime big business is not conducted by small people... war is a continuation of business by other means, making the human virtues fatal even to those who exercise them... no sacrifice is too great for the struggle against war.(98)

It is exactly this warning that Mother Courage does not learn throughout the play despite her drastic experience and loss of her three children. Although she is aware that war is nothing but business, she does not realise she is on the losing side because by her very position she is used as a commodity she herself trades in war and will thereby be consumed by it. Brecht describes his heroine: "Courage recognizes the pure mercantile essence of war : this is exactly what interests her. She believes in war til the end."(99) The loss of her children is part of her loss and profit, just as the loss of thousands of lives of innocent people is in relation to the war profiteers. However, at the end of scene 16, Mother Courage in a rare moment of awareness, which is soon lost, curses war : "It's

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96. Karl Marx, ed. Ernst Fischer and Anna Bostock, **op. cit.,** p. 38.
97. "Der Dreissigjährige Krieg ist einer der ersten Riesen Kriege, die her Kapitalismus über Europa gebracht hat." Brecht, **Schriften zum Theather, ed. cit.,** p. 1149.
98. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 220.
99. **Ibid.,** p. 216.

historic moment to me when they hit my daughter over the eye... Curse the war."(100)

Mother Courage's ignorance raises the question of consciousness. The opening scene of the play reflects the false consciousness of the ignorant, exploited and alienated masses represented in the character of the recruiting officer and the sergeant. Their dialogue about order being the result of wartime, reflects the false consciousness, or what Althusser calls the "uncritical ideology" which he describes as :

> ...the 'familiar,' 'well-known,' transparent myths in which a society or an age can recognize itself (but not know itself), the mirror it looks into for self-recognition, precisely the mirror it must break if it is to know itself ? What is the ideology of a society or a period if it is not that society's or period's consciousness of itself, that is, an immediate material which spontaneously implies, looks for and naturally finds its forms in the image of a consciousness of self living the totality of its world in the transparency of its own myths ?(101)

Myth, being one of the forms of falsifying consciousness and perpetuating a certain condition, is a manifestation of alienated consciousness. This is formulated in the opening scene of **Mother Courage** in the contradiction between reason and unreason. This is implied in the song which transforms the level of the argument to the philosophical plane and makes the play, in substance, a philosophical drama :

> First you must give them beer to drink.
> Then you can face what is to follow —
> But let'em swim before they sink.(102)

War is irrational, exploiting religion to falsify people's consciousness and

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100. Brecht, **Mother Courage and Her Children,** trans. Eric Bentley (London : Eyre Methuen, 1976), p. 55.
101. Louis Althusser, **op. cit.,** p. 144.
102. Brecht, trans. Eric Bentley, **op. cit.,** p. 4.

to recruit more people to keep war going on. Mother Courage, selling liquor to help soldiers fight by making them unconscious, equates religion and wine and makes Mother Courage an agent in war. Mother Courage's song contradicts with the officer and sergeant's talk about religious war and "God's truth," and at the same time, meets it because God's truth is irrational and does not submit to reason. Through this contradiction Brecht wants the audience to see that religion is a means of mental subjugation of people to exploit them ın war for the interests of the ruling class. Mother Courage reveals her situation and attitude to war. It is, therefore, alienated. Here the song is a "gestus" that explains Mother Courage's relation to war and to other people of her own class in wartime. Both Mother Courage and the recruiting officer are traders profiting from war, yet they will be destroyed by it. The idea that people are traded as commodities in war, is conveyed by the sergeant:

> When a war gives you all you earn
> One day it may claim something in return.(103)

What Brecht is interested in here is that the audience, rather than Mother Courage, understand and see that Courage's tragedy lies in "the contradiction which negates a human being, a contradiction that could only be solved by society and through long, terrible struggles."(104) Hence, production of **Mother Courage** relied upon a presentation that lays the blame of what happens to Courage on her false class consciousness. In this sense, the historical continuity between Mother Courage's false consciousness and the false consciousness of the masses at the present time is established. This contradiction lies in the split personality of Mother

103. Brecht, trans. Eric Bentley, **op. cit.,** p. 13.
104. "...das hier ein entsetzlicher Widerspruch, bestand, der einen Menschen vernichtet, ein Widerspruch, der gelöst werden konnte, aber nur von der Gesellschaft selbst und in langen schrecklichen Kämpfen." Brecht, **Gesammelte Werke** (Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1967), p. 1150.

Courage, or as Brecht puts it : mother / trades woman (Handlerin / Mutter, a contradiction which deforms and alienates her beyond recognition. It makes out of her a "hynea of the battlefield" who loses her two children in the process of business deals : Eiliff is recruited while she is busy making a deal, and Swiss Cheese is shot in the process of bargaining over the price of the wagon. Courage's false consciousness, manifested in the contradiction of her situation as mother / tradeswoman, is brought out in the scene when she loses Swiss Cheese; we see the conflict as a business conflict, Courage reacts to the situation, not as a mother, but as a tradeswoman. At the same instant when her son's life is at stake, she starts to trade. The victim of the trading is Swiss Cheese, who dies in the process of the trade.

To present Mother Courage's alienation, Brecht uses the alienation effects. As F.N. Mennemeier observes : "Alienation (Verfremdung) is the answer to alienation (Entfremdung)."(105) The first alienation refers to the technique, while the second to the content. To show that the phenomenon of alienation lies deeply rooted in the present-day society, (Verfremdung) is seen by Brecht as "a manner of composition which seeks expression in the creative-critical utilization of the present."(106) In the difference between the matter presented and the presentation, which Brecht referred to as "showing" (Zeigen) or "present" (Ausstellen) as the process of alienation, the new, the essetial will be seen as possible.

Brecht's epic method of alienation calls for the audience's creative criticism by presenting the problem of alienation and its possible solution by people against a historical background in order to show that man's

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105. F.N. Mennemeier, **"Mother Courage and Her Children : Brecht and Plato,"** (Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder : Brecht und Platon) **The Germanic Review** (1953), p. 120.
106. N.F. Mennemeier, **op. cit.,** p. 85. "Verfremdung stellt sich bei Brecht als eine Weise des Dichtens heraus, die, in der schöpferisch-kritischen Verwertung des Vorhandenen ihren Ausdruck sucht." N.F. Mennemeier, **op. cit.,** p. 385.

destiny is decided by men and that history is not fate, but is made by man. Therefore, Brecht's use of language as an alienation effect is very adequately carried out in **Mother Courage.** To establish the author's philosophical stance, his ideological attitude and his social position, which Brecht combined in the word "gestus," the song is used as an alienation effect. F.N. Mennemeier particularly mentions two songs : "Song of the Great Capitulation" and "Song of Solomon." The first song is full of motherly feelings and is sung by Courage for the "small" capitulation of the soldiers. The linguistic alienation is particularly achieved, as Mennemeier points out, in the repeated refrain of the song by turning the pious proverb "Man proposes : God dispose."(107) By shifting the emphasis and stress, the statement gives the opposite meaning to show that the myth of false consciousness lies in the wrong idea that God, and not man, controls people's life through division between thought and action. The theme of the great capitulation recurs in the "Song of Solomon" to show the interplay of the lyrical and the dramatic levels. The lyrical level, which is provided by the sung verse, contradicts with and is supplemented by the cook's unarticulated thoughts which are in prose. The dramatic level presented by the intervening thoughts of the cook, enhances the song instead of interrupting it. Mennemeier makes the further remark : "Brecht alienates the elementary lyricism by placing the logos-structure in the foreground."(108) In this sense, the lyricism of the song which represents the mythos, or the mythical element in opposition to the logos, is transformed into logos, the rational element, through the alienation effect i.e. by being alienated by the language. The moral scheme of the ballad style makes a deep, metaphysical level recognizable. Behind the rational-pragmatic appeal to the morals, the argument that follows is a complaint about existence, the passing away of existence and the

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107. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 43.

108. "Bert Brecht hat den elementaren Lyrismus der Klage mit vodergrundigen Logos-Strukturen durchsetzt und verfremdet." N.F. Mennemeier, **op. cit.,** p. 391.

nihilism of human works, the good as well as the bad ones.(109)

Another example of linguistic alienation is the written sentence on the placard : "Trilly's victory costs Mother Courage four officers' shirts." It brings the small history of the poor people to the same level of the great history of great people. By juxtaposing the two levels, this alienation effect appeals to the critical faculties of the spectator by bringing out the alienation of the people, which could only be solved by the same people, and not as fate, by presenting it against history.

Brecht's treatment of the different levels of consciousness of alienation (in **The Life of Galileo** the consciousness of the scientist, and in **Mother Courage and Her Children** the consciousness of the masses), is intensified in Brecht's following play : **The Good Person of Setzuan** (1938). In it the content and technique of alienation are clearly synthesized. Marc Zimmerman starts his analysis of the play by announcing it as "a play which fully implements and relates the concepts of **Entfremdung, Verfremdung,** displacement and decentering."(110) The first alienation is very strongly presented in the double personality of Shen Te/Shui Ta, or what Zimmerman refers to as displacement or partial separation of identity. Brecht describes this division of personality as one of the manifestations of alienation produced by present-day class society with its double-value system of social relations : "Good deeds could be realized only through bad ones—a shocking evidence of the unhappy state of this world."(111) **The Good Person of Setzuan** is, in

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109. "Das dem Volksballadenstil angepasste moralisierende Schema last da eine tiefere, metaphysische Schicht erkennen. Hinter dem rational-pragmatischen Appell an die Morallaut der Existenz Klage um die Verganglichkeit des Daseins und die Nichtigkeit menschlicher Werke, der guten wie der schlechten." **Ibid.**, p. 392.
110. M. Zimmerman, "Brecht and the Dynamics of Production," **Praxis,** vol. 3, 1976, p. 118.
111. "...gute Taten waren nur zu ermöglichen durch schlechte Taten—ein erschütterndes Zeugnis für den unglücklichen Zustand dieser Welt." Brecht, **Gesammelte Werke, ed. cit.,** p. 1160.

fact, the incarnation of Brecht's concept of alienation. It reveals man's inner and outer alienation, his self-alienation as well as his alienated, reified relations with others, as historically i.e. socially conditioned by fully exposing the conditions of exploitation in a class society based on commodity relations as reflected upon the good nature of Shen Te and causing it to split into male/female, good/bad antinomies The question which the play raises is: how far is man conscious of his alienation. In its answer to this crucial question, the play offers some hints to the means of solving the problem of alienation. This consists in the exposition of the historical conditions which breed alienation in the process of which the duality of identity, the sign of alienated consciousness, is shown as a reflection of an alienated society based on exploitation, in which man is treated as a commodity and goodness is exploited for selfish ends. Hence, the goodness of the good person Shen Te reflects the alienated consciousness, while her identity as Shui Ta introduces the dialectical relation between being good and being exploited in an exploiting society. The contradiction emanating from this society is that goodness implies, encourages and produces exploitation. That is, goodness is turned into its opposite. Man is exploited because he is good, that is, unconscious of his social existence and the forces of exploitation. His false, or alienated consciousness preserves exploitation by concealing the basic contradiction and the essence of struggle which lies in the class conflict in the process of production. Religion is used as a tool of preserving the false consciousness and maintaining the interest of the forces of exploitation. Hence, to remove the contradiction which causes that alienation and to restore to man his integrative human identity, Brecht dislocates or alienates this dislocated i.e. alienated consciousness. His underlying intention behind the use of alienation effects is to remove man's alienation by demythologizing exploitation, that is, to point out the fact that the phenomenon of exploitation is man made by capitalist social forces which use religion to mystify the masses and to obliterate their consciounsness to the fact of their exploitation by spreading the belief that man's goodness is rewarded in the afterlife. Hence, the essence of capitalist relations is a combination of religious and economic alienations. In this sense, **The Good Person of Setzuan:**

> ...parallels the movement from religion to economics and the continued obfuscation of economic realities or religion and religiously derived morality... which have been coopted by, and are at the service of, capitalism... Thus, the Weberian critique of capitalist development out of Christianity is given a Brechtian treatment which attacks it by presenting it in an alienated and displaced (Oriental—) representation between religion and economics—doing good and doing business—are manipulated and resolved by the gods, who represent both the capitalist base and the religious superstructure of the same system.(112)

The gods are demythologized, brought down to earth and equated with any capitalist business invester, e.g. they say that they do not muddle in economics and, at the same time, say that they have to account for their expenses; they give Shen Te a large capital to start her business; they replace the local bourgeois judges at the trial.

From a practitioner of the "oldest profession," which is a sign of alienation having "to detach her feminity from her humanity and objectify it as a commodity."(113) Shen Te rises in business as a petit bourgeois and joins the social hierarchy of the class which used to exploit her. Her prospering tobacco business flourishes on the exploitation of workers, who eventually rebel against exploitation. Through their unsuccessful rebellion, the workers discover the illusion of goodness in an exploiting society which has its roots in labour and producting, and that the only foreseeable solution is an organized, radical change of the whole system that breeds exploitation. Although this solution is not explicitly mentioned in the play, it appears clearly in the trial scene, the epilogue and the open end of the play. In the trial scene, the workers realize that justice cannot prevail under the existing system, for the laws are made by the class that exploits them. Here, with the gods replacing the local judges, the internationality of the struggle is established and acquires universal dimensions. The problem is stated explicitly by Shen Te at the trial :

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112. M. Zimmerman, **op. cit.,** p. 121.
113. **Ibid.,** p. 122.

Your original order
To be good while yet surviving
Split me like lightning into two people.(114)

But the gods are not here to solve people's problems; all they can do is recommend more goodness and liberalism and exploitation to suppress the workers' rebellion and to maintain capitalist interests by approving of the continued existence of Shui Ta. With the gods departing and Shen Te crying "Help," the epilogue follows this open end and hints at a possible solution :

What is your answer ? Nothing's been arranged.
Should men be better ? Should the world be changed ?
Or just the gods ? Or ought there to be none ?
There is only one solution that we know;
That you should now consider as you go
What sort of measures you would recommend
To help people to a happy end.(115)

The dialectics between the trial, the god's song "Trio of the Vanishing Gods on Their Cloud," and Shen Te's cry for help, and the epilogue reveal that radical change is a vital necessity, but that this change can only be realized through praxis i.e. through a long revolutionary struggle of the masses and not through advice and charity. This is what the open end brings out by correlating to the openness and continuity of struggle and historical transition from capitalism to socialism.

The major dramatic device Brecht uses to achieve the demythologization of alienation is the parable. By alienating the location and temporality of the play, Brecht establishes the dialectical relation between parable-reality and contemporary reality through the open interpretation of parable and reality. Hence the plot round which the play is constructed

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114. Brecht, **The Good Person of Setzuan,** trans. John Willet (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p. 105.
115. Brecht, **op. cit.,** p. 109.

is a parable and is not a parable at the same time. That is, it appears familiar and strange at the same time, for "it is not quite a parable, since it embodies and portrays the very structure which determines the distance and relations between phenomenal appearance and reality."(116) To remove the illusion of the parable reality, Brecht resorts to a partial separation between reality and illusion. Brecht observes : "The illusion created by the theatre must be a partial one, in order that it may always be recognized as an illusion. Reality, however, complete, has to be altered by being turned into art, so that it can be seen as alterable and be treated as such."(117) Albert Bermel grasps the dialectical principle "partial seperation" as the core of Brecht's alienation technique :

> The notion of 'partial separation' might almost be proposed as an analytical tool for dissecting aspects of Brecht's theatre. Instruction is separated—but only partially—from entertainment; ...Similarly, the chronicle structure presupposes a partial separation between the scenes which are not continuous but not quite discontinuous, either. There is a partial separation between the actor and his role ...Brecht would establish a partial separation between the different elements in a performance — the lighting, the design, the music, the dialogue, the staging and so on—so that we can discern the particular contradiction made by each without losing the total theatrical effect. Finally a partial separation exists between the stage and the auditorium. The play may pause for a song or a synopsis of the action or a coliloquy, but the actors do not contravene the undrawn line that divides the stage or transmitting area of the theatre from the seats or receiving area... If they address the audience directly they neither treat them as antagonists (insulting them) nor easy up to them, but rather respect them as friends and equals, people worth playing for.(118)

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116. M. Zimmerman, **op. cit.,** p. 123.
117. Albert Bermel, **Contradictory Characters** (New York : E. P. Dutton and Co., 1973), pp. 221-222.
118. **Ibid.,** pp. 221-222.

In this way, Brecht achieves the "partial separation" between the parable and myth of the play's action (the visits of the gods, the choice of a good person, etc.) by linking the mythical aspects of reality to those of the parable. The interchangeability of parable and reality alienates both and evokes the audience's critical response as to the mythical and parabolic aspects of reality. In this sense, the play establishes a complete identification between the content and technique of alienation.

From the analysis of **The Life of Galileo, Mother Courage and Her Children, The Good Person of Setzuan,** we can observe a certain unity which binds these plays together. This unity is presented by thematic and technical exploration of the philosophical concept of alienation in concrete human situations, which are not totally human because they are distorted and pervaded by class situations. In these plays we observe the alienated characters who have been deformed beyond recognition due to the alienating social conditions which disrupt the integrity of their human essence and split them into two irreconcilable halves. Although this division of the subjective self, enforced by the objective class division takes different forms and serves different ends, it is basically an expression of different dimensions of man's state of alienation. Darko Suvin remarks on the thematic unity of the plays:

> Brecht's basic stance is a utopian blend of intellectual and plebeian alienation from the inhuman contradictions of our times. From such a point of view he effects his whole system of "estrangements" (Verfremdungen). From its heights he judges the world that forces a truly good person to develop a tough competitive Alter Ego that will protect the tender and friendly Ego **(The Good Woman of Setzuan),** the world that uses the humor and shrewdness of a mother trying—and failing—to nourish her own family by cooperating with the warmongers **(Mother Courage and her Children),** the world that forces a passion for reason into officially approved channels of an exploitative science **(The Life of Galileo).** That is why all major plays by Brecht contain an explicit or implit judgment scene : the basic stance of the author is thus

thematized and brought clearly into the open.(119)

In **Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti,** which is not included among Suvin's list of examples of split characters, the character of Puntila is sharply divided into two halves: the drunk Puntila and the sober Puntila. The sober Puntila is the tough, authoritarian, calculating capitalist businessman who engages his daughter to a hateful man for the sake of economic interests; whereas the drunk Puntila is the friendly, humble, bohemian who engages four poor women and sits at the same table with his servants. However, the division between the two Puntilas, unlike that between Shen Te and Shui Ta, or the two sides of Mother Courage, or even the other ego which Galileo uses to outmanoeuvre the authorities, the division of Puntila's character is qualitatively different because the figure of Puntila is basically different: he is a capitalist. E. Speidel warns that "any interpretation that takes the split in Puntila's character as absolute will end up by discovering a tragic quality in the play—a finding that is far removed from Brecht's intention."(120 Being a capitalist, Puntila's division i.e. his alienation, is that of the capitalist. In other words, his personality is confirmed rather than denied by this alienation, because he sees himself as a whole, sane human being in this state. Whereas in the case of the other figures who are mainly from among the exploited masses or are socially united with them (as in Galileo's case), their alienation distrorts their human personalities and destroys their entire life. While the poor and wretched are forced to develop an alter ego which is out of their control to protect them against the exploiting class, Puntila who belongs to the exploiting class, consciously concots a friendly alter ego to protect him against the exploited masses. Whereas the split ego of the exploited masses is irreconcialable because it has to be radically eliminated and restored to its human who-

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119. D. Suvin, "Brecht's **Caucasian Chalk Circle** and Marxist Figuralism : Open Dramaturgy as Open History," **Weapons of Criticism,** ed. Norman Rudich (California : Ramparts Press, 1976), p. 342.
120. E. Special, "Brecht's 'Puntila' : A Marxist Comedy, **Modern Language Review** (1970), p. 325.

leness, that of Puntila's is reconcilable because his apparently double ego is united in one identity, namely, that of the capitalist. The two egos of Puntila serve the ends of the capitalist. The excessive physical indulgence of the drunk Puntila are an extension of the economic and social exploitation of the sober Puntila. In his sobriety Puntila exploits the people for his economic interests, and in his drunkenness he exploits the same people for his physical pleasures. For instance, he employs the people and refuses to sign contracts while he is drunk, and then turns them away when he becomes sober, thus ruining their chances of employment. The four women he engages are seen by him as mere objecets to satisfy his lust for company and pleasure, and when he is sober he cruelly dismisses them from his estate. He continually exploits Matti for his selfish enjoyments. Even when he wants to climb the Hatelmaberg, it is Matti who constructs it for him :

> **Matti : It's** a mountain with a path, not one of those half-baked ones like God created in such a hurry because he only had six days, so that he had to go on and create a whole mass of servants for you to tackle jobs with, Mr. Puntila.(121)

For Puntila, human relations mean "the exchange of one type of exploitation for a different one... All his talk about 'humanity' is entirely non-committal : it does not tie him in any way, he does not extend help, he is not even interested in others as human beings."(122) Hence, Puntila's attempts to establish friendships with his servants are not at all genuine because his liberal bourgeois consciousness is an alienated one and is, therefore, beyond the possibility of being revolutionized. Posing as the friendly, humble human being, Puntila tries to win the love and sympathy of the poor people whom he exploits as the sober landlord. By using this dangerous mechanism, Puntila tries to camouflage his

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121. Brecht, **Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti,** trans. John Willett (London : Eyre Methuen, 1977), p. 89.
122. E. Speidel, **op. cit.,** p. 326.

capitalist interests in order to weaken the class antagonism between himself and the exploited people. In this way, he hopes to protect himself, whether sober or drunk, from the wrather of the people. There is an instance in the play which proves that the two sides of Puntila's character are in harmony, united by his capitalist interests as a landlord. Having employed the red Surkkala while drunk—an act which he cannot do while sober because Surkkala is refused employment by all the neigbouring landlords for his reputation as a subversive person—he also dismisses him while he is drunk not sober. This incident confirms that Puntila is, at all times, behaving as an exploiter but using different tactics. For both Puntilas the dismissal of Surkkala is necessary because, after the veiled threats of the neighbours, his employment would be a threat to the economic interests of the soberPuntila and the pleasure interests of the drunk Puntila. This instance is also an implicit trial of Puntila in which his true identity is revealed and the verdict is passed.

In his notes to the play, Brecht wrote down some directions for the production and acting of the various roles. For the roles of Puntila and Matti, he wrote :

> The class antagonism between Puntila and Matti is decisively established. The role of Matti should be casted in such a way that establishes a real balance, that is, to show that he is intellectually superior. The presenter of Puntila should guard against any involvement of the audience through the vitality or charm of the drunkenness scenes, which could make the audience lose the freedom to criticize the character.(123)

Brecht's own interpretation of the characters establishes Matti as the true

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123. "Entscheidend ist die Ausformung des Klassenantagonismus zwischen Puntila and Matti. Die Rolle des Matti muss so besetzt werden, dass eine echte Balance kommt, das heisst, dass die geistige Ueberlegenheit bei ihm liegt. Der Darsteller des Puntila muss sich hüten, in den Trunkenheitssczenen das Publikum durch Vitalität oder Charme so mitzuerrissen, dass ihm nicht mehr die Frieheit bleibt, ihn zu kritisieren." **Gesammelte Werke, ed. cit.,** p. 1172.

alter ego of Puntila as an intense, irreconcilable antinomy placed within the context of class struggle. The antagonism between Puntila and Matti should not be interpreted on the individual, subjective level but on a higher objective plane which elevates the play to the level of a philosophical drama. The conflict between Puntila, the protagonist, and Matti his antagonist, is a social conflict between two systems of social relations: in the dramatic conflict the protagonist Puntila represents the present capitalist class, while his antagonist Matti stands for the futuristic class. In this sense, the dangers of the charm and vitality of the drunken Puntila with which he tries to lure the masses into more submission are checked and controlled by Matti's reason and intellectual superiority. The idea of the ability to control the forces of exploitation and destruction is expressed by Brecht in the twenty-fifth paragraph of "The Short Organum for the Theatre" :

> Even the wholly anti-social can be a source of enjoyment to society so long as it is presented forcefully and on the grand scale. It then often proves to have considerable powers of understanding and other unusually valuable capacities, applied admittedly to a destructive end. Even the bursting flood of a vast catastrophe can be appreciated in all its majesty by society, if society knows how to master it; then we make it our own.(124)

We can read here a direct link between the idea of society's control over the anti-social and destructive forces as being a source of enjoyment and the conflict between Puntila and Matti. Though the conflict is not decidedly solved, we understand that the intellectual superiority of Matti, which he acquired as a result of his consciousness of the social contradictions from his position as a servant, will enable him to control the chaotic world of all the Puntilas which is similar to the catastrophic bursting of floods. For that reason Brecht refers to his play in the Prologue as a comedy :

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124. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 187.

........................the times are sad
When worry's sane, and not to worry mad,
Still, gloomy faces canont set them right
So we present a comic play tonight.(125)

The element of comedy in the play lies in the pleasure derived from the ability to control the destructive social forces. In the class conflict, the futuristic vision of a controlled classless society, the anti-social attitudes can have qualities of social promise, and they are mastered and used for the benefit of society. The raison d'être of the play is expressed by Matti's last words before he leaves Puntila :

The hour for taking leave has struck
So, Puntila, I wish you luck.
I've known them worse than you and twice as tough;
You're halfway human when you've drunk enough,
But comradeship dissolves in boozer's gloom.
It's back to normal, and the old "Who Whom" ?
Sad as I am to find out in the end
That oil and water cannot ever blend
It's not much help, there's nothing I can do :
So—time your servants turned their backs on you.
They'll find a decent master pretty fast.
Once they've become the masters here at last.(126)

The fact that "oil and water cannot ever blend" which has been proved throughout the play in many situations—implicitly by Matti's continual objections and corrections of wrong actions in the form of examples and stories, and explicitly by Eva's scene—is the motive for the servants to become the masters. However, it needs the intellectual superiority of Matti to know how to control society in the same way as one would control a bursting flood i.e. nature. Here Brecht's stance is established.

In his notes to the play, entitled "Notes on the Folk Play," Brecht

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125. Brecht, **op. cit.,** Prologue.
126. **Ibid.,** p. 92.

calls **Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti** a folk play, and talks at length about the folk play as a traditional form and its contemporary counterpart the "Revue":

> The 'Volksstück' or folk play is normally a crude and humble kind of theatre which academic critics pass over in silence or treat with condescension. In the second case they prefer it to be what it is, just as some regimes prefer their 'Volk' crude and humble. It is a mixture of earthy humour and sentimentality, homespun morality and cheap sex. The wicked get punished and the good get married off; the industrious get left legacies and the idle get left in the lurch. ...The big cities moved with the times, progressing from the folk play to the revue. Revue is to the folk play as a song-hit to a folksong, though the folk play lacked the folksong's nobility.(127)

However, this does not mean that Brecht wants to revive the old form of traditional folk play. He is rather looking for a new form that would replace both the traditional folk play and the revue, for while the first failed to develop into artistic literary form, the latter failed to become popular. Hence the new folk play implies:

> ...a need for naive but not primitive, poetic but not romantic, realistic but not ephemerally political theatre. What might a new folk play of this sort look like? With regard to the story the literary revue gives some useful hints... It does without any unified, and continuous story and presents 'numbers,' that is to say loosely-linked sketches. This form... revives the old popular epics, though admittedly in a form difficult to recognize... The new kind of folk play could draw conclusions from the more autonomous achievements of the literary revue, but it needs to provide more epic substance and to be more realistic.(128)

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127. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.**, p. 153.
128. **Ibid.** p. 154.

The new folk play also entails a "style of presentation that is both artistic and natural,"(129) for, as Brecht maintains:

> A truly cultured theatre never has to buy its realism at the cost of sacrificing artistic beauty. Reality may lack beauty, but that by no means disqualifies it for a stylized stage. Just its lack of beauty may be the chief subject of the representation—in a comedy such base human characteristics as avarice, swank, stupidity, ignorance, disputatiousness; in a serious play the de-humanized social setting... Art is in a position to represent the ugly man's ugliness in a beautiful manner, the base man's baseness in a noble manner. For the artist can also show ungraciousness graciously and meekness with power. There is no reason why the subject matter of a comedy portraying 'life as it is' should not be ennobled.(130)

Brecht wrote **Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti** during his exile in Finland in 1940 while he was living on the estate of the Finnish authoress Hella Wuolijoki, where both collaborated to dramatize Wuolijoki's folk tale about the estate owner Puntila. Although most of the figures of the original version are kept in Brecht's play, the conventional plot of the folk-tale is changed (e.g. in the original plot Eva, after refusing to marry the diplomat preferring to become engaged to the chauffeur instead, is happy to find out in the end that the chauffeur is an engineer disguised in his own servant's uniform, and the play ends with a happy marriage of two people of equal social status).(131) In Brecht's play the conventional end is discarded and instead new social relations and attitudes are introduced. In this sense, **Puntila and His Man Matti** may be regarded as an experiment (Versuch) to produce the new folk-play that would measure up to Brecht's own concept of it. In the new interpretation of the character, the elevated style of the stylized drama is kept but is invested with a realistic representation of the simple and crude human qualities. Greed, vulgarity, stupidity and ugliness are represented with

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129. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 154.
130. **Ibid.,** p. 155.
131. E. Speidel, **op. cit.,** p. 319.

humour, imagination and wisdom, and a sense of beauty which has the force of mastering the ugly. Hence, Puntila, who is more than just an individual but rather a "national figure" and his adventures which are represented as "local historical" events, acquire the same mythological greatness of the folktale. The poetic element is contained in Puntila's words as much as in the style or presenting his character on the stage. Brecht strictly recommends that the role of Puntila must not for one instant and in no way be robbed of its natural charms, and that a special art is necessary in order to render the drunkenness scenes in a poetic and elegant manner, with as much variation as possible, and the sobriety scenes as ungrotesque and unbrutal as possible.(132) Matti, on the other hand, does not possess any mythological elements. His intellectual superiority, which is manifested in the form of stories and anecdoctes by which he illustrates a particular situation, serves to demythologize the old fable by approximating the development of the action to reality i.e. the fable, like reality, develops in contradictions. Reality is revealed through concrete class situations which bring out the social contradictions in objective terms. Brecht's intention behind new presentation is to externalize the subjective conflict around which the traditional folk-tale and the revue are constructed in order to show that under capitalism the conflict is not between man and man or man and fate, but between man and a particular economic system. As Brecht remarked in **The Messingkauf Dialogues** : "Somebody in Chicago can set a piece of machinery going that will destroy twelve people in Ireland, or maybe twelve thousand."(133) Thus, the play's action becomes realistic, i.e. it develops through contradictions between characters in particular situations. Here the conflict is reflected in the class barriers in the relationship between Puntila and Matti, and Matti and Eva, as representations of the master-servant relationship in class society, and the contradictions which this implies result in the end in the fact that "oil and water cannot ever blend." In the scene of Eva's trial the contradictions between two sets of

132. Brecht, **Gesammelte Werke, ed. cit.,** p. 1168.
133. Brecht, trans. J. Willett, **op. cit.,** p. 32.

social values caused by class barriers and class prejudice which make the real natural relationship between man and woman an impossibility, are evidently represented. This proves that the bourgeois romantic concept of love crumbles down in reality because it cannot surpass the class barrier or reconcile people of different classes who have two opposed sets of social values. The trial of Eva is an alienation effect that alienates the alienated social relations by making the contradictions obvious and recognizable in a way that makes them appear familiar and strange at the same time. In this way, the presentation of the contradictions i.e. the technique, corresponds to the theme of the split personality of Puntila and its alter ego Matti as two irreconcilable opposites which is a sign of alienation and a reflection, in flesh and blood, of two opposed socio-economic systems. In this manner, Brecht could transform the unrealistic, mythological fable of the old folk tale and make it into a new folk play that deals with daily politics. By theatre of daily politics Brecht meant a theatre for the masses that raises their consciousness of the fact of their alienation and that shows it to them in their daily life, as well as their ability to transcend that alienation. This transcendence represents the historical transition from capitalism to a socialist, classless society.

Summing up the conclusions reached through the analysis of Brecht's plays, we should note that the major characteristic of Brecht's theatre is represented by the intimate relation between alienation as concept and technique. Through his study of alienation as a philosophical and socio-economic concept, Brecht discovered new dimensions of which he developed and formulated his epic technique. This new technique, contained in the alienation effects, is produced by the content conveyed in the concept of alienation. However, though the priority is for content, form reacts on content. This dialectical relation between form and content guides and shapes Brecht's treatment of the concept and technique of alienation throughout all his plays. This radical innovation established the epic theatre as a new theory and praxis of the theatre which sets it in opposition to Aristotelian drama.

It has been revealed through the analysis of Brecht's plays that Brecht's

treatment of alienation, as theme and technique, has developed in a spiral manner from an idealistic materialism, to historical materialism. That is to say, Brecht's interpretation of alienation as a concept and form moves from the lower to the higher, from the psychological level in the early phase to the socio-political level of the Lehrstücke to a dialectical materialistic combination of both the subjective and the objective levels. This development reveals the unity of Brecht's theatre in its varying levels, a progressive unity through variety incarnated in the problem of alienation as the pivotal idea of Brecht's philosophical drama.

CONCLUSION

Since Brecht's death in 1956 until the present day, innumerable volumes of books, hundreds of academic researches have been written about his theatre, and discussions, seminars and conferences have been held in honour of his memory. The most notable of these international deliberations are the "Brecht-Dialogues" held in East Berlin in 1968 on the occasion of Brecht's seventieth anniversary, and the one held in 1978 celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday, and the 1978 dialogue the most recent celebration of the dramatist's eightieth anniversary, Besides, there is a series of volumes entitled "Brecht Discussions" which is systematically published for the same purpose.

This great wealth in honour of Brecht's memory implies two major controversial attitudes towards his theatre. The one is expressive of Max Frisch's view contained in his famous phrase "the grandeur of impotence" (durchschlagende Wirkungslosigkeit), meaning that Brecht's theatre has become, like that of all classicists, socially ineffective. The other adopts a more positive stance towards Brecht's theatre by attempting not to keep Brecht alive, but to surpass him by offering new interpretaions of his works. The dichotomy between these two attitudes represents a contradiction : on the one hand, the call for cannonizing Brecht by shelving him among the classicists fossilizes his theatre and turns it into a museum that contains monuments of high archeological value. The other side of the contradiction, namely the attempts to deal with Brecht's plays as if they were written twenty years after his death by forcing a new interpretation of the already completed works, robs his theatre of the greatness which is normally associated with the classics. The contradiction arising from these two highly ambivalent attitudes, raises an issue of great importance, namely, how to synthesize the classic and the modern (i.e. the contemporary) Brechtian theatre.

The contradiction lies in the fact that great works literature, when

they become part of the tradition (i.e. classic), constitute an obstacle in the way of development. That is because any great work, by virtue of its greatness, necessarily becomes classic, in which case it also becomes a closed system of ideas and techniques. This, in turn, prevents any attempt at developing or transforming it. In Brecht's case, this raises the issue of the possibility that the works of the creative artists—and the revolutionary artist in particular—offer to his followers. In other words, if the artist's work represent a school, in the sense of a closed system that does not lend itself to further development, regression and imitation would be the natural results of following his model, since the nature of the closed system leaves no room for creative innovations. Hence, any creative development would be prevented because the followers would be unable to look at his work freshly, and all they would be able to do is imitate his model, which is the antithesis of creativity. But, since Brecht's tradition is open and not closed because of his application of the dialectical method, and since creativity for Brecht means radical i.e. revolutionary change, mere imitation would render change impossible. That is, any attempt to imitate Brecht, would be unable to surpass his tradition. Hence, the logical consequence of imitative attempts is rebellion since imitation and rebellion are interrelated because imitation robs the author of his ability of creative change, and turns him into a rebel who moves within the tradition without offering any radical innovation.

However, the fact that Brecht's theatre does not lend itself to transformation into a closed system does not rob him of his greatness i.e. of being classic. For in becoming a classic, Brecht's theatre—due to its dialectical method—produces its antithesis, which is an open system. In this case a new synthesis could be reached which would imply the two contradictory concepts, namely, Brecht's classicity and the possibility of surpassing it.

The emergence of the controversial attitudes towards Brecht's theatre are the result of the contradictory social function which Brecht's theatre assumed since the time of his return to the GDR in 1948. In his illuminating article "The Dialectics of Legitimation", David Bathrick tackles

the attempts of legilimitinz Brecht's theatre made by the East German official government. He throws light on the problem by posing the crucial question, which was never satisfactorily answered by any Brecht symposium: "Can a revolutionary theater forged as a means for transforming society remain true to its original intention if used to affirm rather than Critically change social conditions? Worded differently, what are the implications for revolutionary culture when it is forced to function as legitimation"?(134) His answer is an adequate summary of the contradictory function of Brecht's theatre since his return to East Berlin:

> Indeed, contained within the function of Brecht as a cultural figure in the GDR are two diametrically opposed notions of culture, which, although different in nature, feed upon, sustain and promote each other in the day-to-day function of cultural policy. On the one hand, we find culture as a restorative — affirmative instrument, either as a reflection of achievement which has accrued — the "classical" production of Brecht's plays... or theather is used ideologically to legitimize the profound alienation and contradiction inherent in the early transitional years... Coexisting, occasionally undermining and always at odds with this notion of culture simply as superstructural affirmation is the idea of art as productivity, as active critical appropriation of reality.(135)

In the Eastern block, particularly in GDR(where Brecht's theatre is integrated within the cultural-political system and is made to function as a cultural vehicle for substantiating the official ideology, the aspect of "art-as-productivity" of Brecht's theatre is overlooked for the sake of the "restorative-affirmative" function. In this sense, Brecht's art is turned into a closed, abstract system that loses touch with reality, in order to serve the consolidation of a system, the transformation of which is considered an illegitimate and unacceptable activity. For a system that

134. David Bathrick, "Dialectics of Legitimation," New German Critique (No. 2, Spring 1974), p. 91.
145. **Ibid.**

strongly maintains that in a society where the class struggle has disappeared, the presentation of plays that deal with such an issue should be carried out only in so far as it expresses the contradictions of a by-gone historical era. However, in doing so, they prevent any discussion of new contradictions that have emerged within the new social system. This is, in our opinion, an absolute negation of the essence of Brecht's theatre which is an immanent critique of all kinds of social contradictions at any given historical period with the intention of destroying false consciousness which, for Brecht, was incorporated in the ideology or the superstructure of the existing status quo. His presentation of alienated consciousness derives from his dialectical method that reveals the concrete contradictions in the light of the ever changing social and political conditions, that is, the elevation of the contradictions to a higher plane of reality. That means that the new contradictions which arise in a socialist society, and which are qualitatively different from those of a capitalist society, should also be revealed and criticized in the light of a new consciousness. In this sense, Brecht's method never presents a finished or a complete system, but is rather a process and a scheme that continually proceeds towards a yet unrealized future. Within the framework of Brecht's open method, his theatre does not deal with abstract, or eternal concepts but represents, in concrete terms, the relativity and transitoriness of social systems together with man's ability of achieving that transition. However, the attempts to present Brecht's plays as classical works in the traditional sense, alienate his theatre from its original message. The contradictions in the plays are represented as external phenomena to the socialist society in order to show the difference between the two contradictory systems, the socialist and the capitalist. However, this prevents Brecht's theatre from development because real development implies a consciousness of the internal contradictions in one system.

The attitude towards Brecht's tradition in the West is a similar one, though from a different viewpoint, namely to fossilize Brecht's theatre. If in the East attempts are made to separate Brecht's idea of socialism from official socialism, the Western bourgeoisie separates Brecht's politics from his art. In this sense, Brecht's contributions are narrowed down

to mere technicalities. This attitude is adequately expressed by Manfred Wekwerth, Brecht's disciple and the present manager of the Berliner Ensemble after the death of Brecht's widow Helena Weigel:

> Brecht's theatrical devices, invented to destroy social and theatrical habits, have become habitual themselves through constant unconscious and unconsciounable repitiion. They no longer mediate reality, they merely realize a medium. Brecht's central concern, to show reality as changeable and thus to reunite stage and audience in mutual enjoyment, is turned into the sort of strangely distant attitude with which one regards a hallowed classic which is no longer excessively familiar. In short, Brecht's method of liberating the theatre from aesthetic paralysis, from style, of making the theatre changeable for the representation of change, has been nailed down as a style. Brecht has become the Brecht-syle.(136)

Here again Brecht's theatre is turned into a closed system but within a different trend, namely, that of de-ideologization and technicism as a replacement of ideologl, which is a by-product of advanced capitalism. By concentrating upon technical issues to conceal the vacuity of the content, the theatre becomes a mere instrument of entertainment, the type which Brecht called "Culinary", and the social content is diluted or completely emptied. The artist who, in this case, becomes a technocrat, uses the theatre to obliterate people's consciousness and to maintain the status quo. In short, in both cases-in the East and the West-Brecht's theatre which is originally a liberation from alienation, has fallen prey to an accute alienation.

To free Brecht's theatre from the double alienation, that is, from the rigidity of a dogmatic ideology and from de-ideologization and technicism, a new Brechtian theatrical formula must arise which represents a transformation from the absolute (closed) to the relative (open) through the application of Brecht's dramaturgical method which is dialectical,

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136. Manfred Wekwerth, "Brecht Today", Op. Cit., p. 119.

dynamic and open to change and development. It should be noted that Brecht's theatre incorporates a combination of the spirit of the Enlightenment, which represents rational thinking (but which is, by nature of the age of Enlightenment, mechanical), together with the spirit of the twentieth century which is relativity, and an approach to reality in an open, dynamic way relying upon the dialectical method. In this sense, Brecht's theatre represents a higher stage of enlightenment, or Post-Enlightenment, combining a dialectical perspective and rationalization without absolutizing reason. It is, thus, an evolutionary, ad-infinitum proces of realization of de-alienation of reason. Hence, Brecht's theatre is a transformation from absolute reason, represented by rigid ideology, to committed reason (committed to change reality through the liberation of mind) which saves ideology from turning into dogma and totalitarianism which claim to absolute truth, and thereby towards dictatorship which means abolition of freedom.

The aim of Brecht's theatre is to destroy ideology (Zertrümmerung von Ideologie) in the sense of eliminating the false or alienated consciousness which is a reflection of the alienated socio-economic relations, and to establish in its place a true, i.e. scientific consciusness, based on an understanding of historical and dialactical materialism, the tools of scientific socialism. The substitution of a ture consciousness, i.e. ideology, by a false one, is intended to serve the interests of the new, rising classes by helping to shape a scientific ideology with which they can change society and control it. In this sense, Brecht's theatre starts from the familiar, alienated consciousness, which it then alienates in order to reach the potential consciousness. Therefore, the ideology which Brecht's theatre incorporates is not and should not be represented as an and in itself, but as a means of liberating man from alienation. In this sense, a true representation of Brecht's theatre should help man control his destiny, understand his condition reasonably, become more integrated with himself and with others and thus, in harmony with society. However, this harmony will not be realized unless man knows the concrete, particular causes which separate him from his essence, and by recognizing them, proceeds to overcome them and change the conditions that made him an

alienated being. However, when this is done, new contradictions arise which disrupt man's sense of harmony and integration. Therefore, man sets out to fight the new contraditions which are higher and more advanced in quality, until he reaches a state of equilibrium which makes him feel at home in the world i.e. within the limits of nature. This incessant process of controlling and being controlled by nature is the motive and driving force behind man's evolution from a state of alienation towards de-alienation.

Due to the evolutionary nature of this movement, ideology which represents the writer's world view and of which his attitude to alienation is a reflection, should not become an absolute. When ideology is turned into dogma, man sinks into unconsciousness or, at least, loss of consciousness. In this case, ideology acts as a means to preserve instead of eliminate alienation. To avoid such deviation, one has to be close to human truth pattern of turth which is relative and not absolute. Absolute turth is never attained, but it is on the way, because we are living in time of change, not in eternity.

On the other hand, the tendency towards abondonment of ideology through absolutization of technique, which is known as de-ideologization, does not solve the problem because it substitutes an absolute by another one, which has become a mark of the advanced industrial societies. Moreover, this theory of de-ideologization is a decisive proof that man can never live without a certain "ism", or system.

Hence, the question that arises; what kind of pattern or system should be adopted that would cope with man's tencency towards completeness and integration and, at the same time, stimulate and accelerate his movement towards de-alienation or harmonization in the process of transformation from one system to anther. The answer is : an open system and not a closed one. Although an open system might seem unrealizable, being a contradiction in terms, it is possible if man is considered as an end in himself and not as a means. That is to say, humanization of man in which man can be himself. This is achieved through a method that

undertakes to see the genuine dialectics of the relations of production and productive forces, which represents the human component of the productive forces in any given society.

The openness of Brecht's ideology is represented by the dialectical technique of alienation effects. If the ideology is concerned with the revelation of the causes of alienation inherent in the contradictions of a social system, the technique brings out these contraditions in concrete terms and by maintaining a dialectical relation that proceeds along a spiral movement as realized by the components of the play.

The identification of content and form, which constitutes the unity of a work of art, is the aim of any artist and thinker. However, the point is that such unity can be achieved either within a closed or an open system. The realization of this unity within a closed system, makes the work of art rigid and incapable of being developed and, in consequence, incapable of transforming reality. Yet, if the unity of content and form is achieved within an open system, the work is rendered subject to development. This means that unity implies variety. Unity within the closed system is a negation of variety because it reduces the form to formalistic elements and the social relations between characters are sacrificed for formal relations because the content is diluted and is ultimately extricated from the form. In this sense, the writer's intention to realize the unity of content and form, within the frame of closed system, makes the unity a formalistic one. In the open system, on the other hand, the unity is kept dynamic and developing through the content, which correlates to the development and change of reality from which the content is derived. In Brecht's theatre, the content and form are alienation as a phenomenon in social reality. However, his intention is not merely to achieve an aesthetic unity of content and form, but to eliminate alienation. Through the unity of content and technique of alienation. Brecht encourages the audience to reject the alienated reality by arousing their critical judgment. But rejection and criticism are not sufficient enough to eliminate the alienated reality because without offering an alternative to a rejected reality, the attempt to reject realiy could force

the spectator into an imaginary world. Moreover, to reject reality without offering an alternative, means an adherence to reality. Hence, an alternative means for the liberation of reality from alienation is to be achieved within a dialectical unity between content and form which reveals the new reality. Here arises the vital importance of the dialectical method which represents the new reality as implied and incorporated in the alienated reality.

To achieve a unity between content and form in a post-Brechtian era, howeverfi can be done through a disruption of the original unity of Brecht's completed plays. Since his system is open, it implies integration and disintegration through the dialectical unity of content and form. To clarify this point, a distinction should be made between the content of Brecht's plays i.e. the subjects, and his method. This point is clearly explained by M. Wekwerth at the International Colloquy for Theatre People from Countries of the Third World, entitled "Theatre and Social Reality" held in East Berlin in 1976 :

> As a dialectician, Brecht dedicated his work to transitoriness, to changes in things. Thus, dialectics is the life element of all his work and poetry, and when I speak of Brecht's transitoriness I really mean the same as Brecht when he spoke about Shakespeare. If we produce Brecht's plays today, it would be quite wrong to put them on the stage as though a contemporary had written them. Brecht's subjects were the subjects of his time, they were the great class battles of the twenties. E.g. it would be wrong to equate German fascism with fascism in Chile when performing "Arturo Ui". In this Brecht is transitory, but his view, his method which makes social processes visible in all phenomena is everlasting, and in this sense... although Brecht's productions have passed into time, we have by no means learned to utilise his method.(137)

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137. "Theatre and Social Reality", International Colloquy for Theatre People from Countries of the Third World, Schildow, Berlin 1976.

Brecht's method, as Wekwerth explains it, has been subject to many misunderstandings as a result of which a diversion from Brecht's theatre can be observed. Wekwerth comments on these misunderstandings in his opening speach at the same colloquy:

> In my opinion, there is a tendency to two dangers in present-day theatre work. And they appear to be based only in a misunderstanding of the question; How should I depict social processes and social attitudes on the stage? The one tendency claims : As political struggle, ideological struggle, the class struggle has become sharper, more shortlived, more flexible, it is obstructive, in fact even damaging to strive for artistic results; such as trying to put grand style acting on stage even simply staging grand style theatre. They ask, would it be better to follow in Brecht's footsteps and directly put up theses such as "learn, learn and learn again", to quote Lenin, or, because the situation of a complicated class struggle is continually changing should this not cause us to say directly, bluntly and without any dithering just how one should behave politically, i.e. socially. There exists a viewpoint, also among left-wing theatre people, that in this situation the attempt to create art is bourgeois and thus to be rejected, that direct agitation is politically more effective, and partly they point to Brecht and his didactic plays. The second danger I see is that when continuing Brecht one forgets that he, too, is transitory, or in other words, as Brecht demanded, we show the world as changeable which means that Brecht cannot be excluded from change. But wherein does a change in Brecht lie? Surely not in external, formal changes such as placing a figure on the right where it had previously stood left, or if an up to now understandable dialogue with the audience is now garbled and no longer understandable with the reasons that this would show the lack of communication between people. I am speaking of ottempts — and these concern not only Brecht — at a purely formal modernisation of theatre, whereby the lack of knowledge about social relationships leads to these being replaced by formal relationships. Brecht once said, and I find this very good, that theatre must be a practical reflection of reality; it must put the audience and the actors into a position where they can change the world, and this not only because

> the laws of social development demand such change, but because they want to adapt it to their demands on life, out of desire and conviction. These two tendencies are two extremes: the one denies art to become socially effective through direct agitation. It is very popular today, also among left-wing groups... And the other tendency is to no longer speak about social relations, but only about art, whereby art as a human relationship is lost.(138)

The right way of presenting Brecht at the present day, as Wekwerth sees it, is in considering the two aspects under which Brecht always put on a play : the first, is that of "the epoch in which we live", in the sense of depicting the historical transition from capitalism to socialism and showing it as "social attitudes, i.e. not as a thesis or a scholarly view, but in human behaviour".(139) The second aspect recommended by Brecht has to do with "daily politics", in the sense of adapting any presentation of a Brecht play to the contemporary local struggle. In this connection Wekwerth mentions as an example of the implementation of this method, the production of **The Exception and the Rule**, put on at the 1968 Brecht Dialogue by Arab students in which they used Arabic music, their traditions of human relations and depicted their own topical struggle against social and national oppression.

From the previously mentioned, we can deduce that the development and surpassing of Brecht's theatre lie in the application of his method of theatrical presentation. Although Wekwerth expresses this point clearly, he seems to exclude the Berliner Ensemble from any such attempts at surpassing Brecht. As a matter of fact, the Ensemble and its management have been accused of museumifying Brecht and, thus, stifling the possibilities of presenting his plays within a fresh and developing view. Mairowitz registers his impressions about the Ensemble's production of **The Life of Galileo** at the 1978 Brecht-Dialogue, directed by Wekwerth :

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138. M. Wekwerth, **op. cit., p. 12.**
139. **Ibid.**

> Political reality has forced this turn of events upon the Ensemble, and no amount of Brecht-dialoguing can alter the grim facts. The role of taking Brecht beyond himself now lies with younger, more virile theatres, and the Ensemble will have to accept its function as theatrical nucleus and archive, home of the wise, but inert village. elders.(140)

The task of "taking Brecht beyond himself" has been actually carried out by groups of young people, both inside and outside East Berlin. They have tried to free Brecht's theatre from the reification imposed upon it, by resorting to the methodology of his art as a starting point which can offer great opportunities for many alternatives. The beginning of such attempts was instigated by the publication of Reiner Steinweg's major study of Brecht's Lehrstucke. Since the publication of Steinweg's treaties on the Lehrstucke, and relying on his assemble, reconstructed theory, many experiments have been conducted to apply and develop the Lehrstucke by using them, and mainly **The Measures Taken,** as models for a theatre of social and political education. The various experiments and the discussions that followed them and the conclusions reached from the experiments have been edited by Steinweg and published in a book entitled : **Brecht's Model of the Lehrstucke, Certificiates Discussions and Experiments** (Brechts Modell der Lehrstucke, Zeugnisse, Diskussion, Erfahrungen, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1976).

The first of these experiments was carried out by a group of students at the Department of Pedogogics in the Theatre School of Amsterdam, within the frame of their specialization, namely, staging (Regisseuren). The practical intention of the project was to educate these Regisseuren politically by using the Lehrstuck **The Measures Taken** as an exercise in the learning process as a praxis of the Lehrstucktheory. The emphasis was made on the technical aspects, such as the use of the radio, television,

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140. David Zane Mairowitz, "Brecht-Dialog 1978", **Plays and players** (Vol. 25, No. 8, April 1978), p. 43.

tape-recorders as means of education, as well as the ideological aspect of developing the political consciousness of the participants.

The second project was conducted at Mathias School in East Berlin, with school children as an attempt to use the Lehrstuck as text to "influence reality". In this sense, the theory was tested, criticized and modified as a result of discovering some shortcomings that appeared during the course of the performance, and which were to be reworked in future praxis.

Within the realm of professional theatre, some attempts were made to experiment with the Lehrstuck as a starting point for the creation and development of a new interpretation in the light of Brecht's theoretical writings and his theatrical practise. The most notable of these attempts are the two experiments with Brecht **Fatzer** (the Lehrstuck version) which were carried out as workshop projects at Berlin Freie Universitat, and at Stanford University, U.S.A. and directed by Andrwej Wirth (a German Visiting professor at the Freie Universitat, Berlin). The basic object of the two workshops was to carry Brecht beyond himself through a practical, collective text-reading and discourse-making. A. Wirth describes the two projects;

> The Stanford and Berlin workshops focused on a **receptor,** who reproduces the text as reader-player and who himself is "produced" by the text... We tried to play the author and the reader as roles. Through the fictional text we felt liberated from the limitations of reality and yet we felt encouraged to play our own real expectations, beliefs and phobias as an extention of the text... In the Stanford experiment, the **Lehrstuck** became **Lehrspiel,** a dramatic reading of the text in space; through the interplay of the two systems of reference, meaning is produced... A difficult issue with the Berlin group were the demands of the artistic form : these demands were opposed as an authoritarian discipline or as an esthetic deviation. The motivation for the group work was obviously more ideological than esthetic; the opposite seemed to be the case at Stanford. In Berlin, the majority of the paticipants seemed to be interested in using Brecht as a tool for creating

an ideological homogenous and exclusive collective.(141)

The results of the two projects demonstrate the controversial attitudes of the East and West in understanding Brecht. The individualistic and idealist approach to Brecht, and the emphasis on the aesthetic implications of the text and the combination of the Lehrstuck and the epic play as two reconcilable types of communicative theatre (the Western term for educational theatre), all undermine the ideological, i.e. social and political, implications of the content. On the other hand, the emphasis on the text's ideological content, demonstrates the dogmatic Eastern approach to Brecht's theatre.

These two opposed attitudes are a strong hint to the possible path of Brecht's theatre in the future. In order to grasp the essence of Brecht's theatre, the practice of the active audience participation by superseding the dichotomy between the audience and stage through the application of the dialectical method, the ideological content of the method should be kept as an integral part of the dialectical relation betwen content and form. To use the word dialectical instead of ideological (Brecht thought on many occasions to substitute dialectical for epic theatre to prevent misunderstandings and misrepresentation of epic technique) does not mean to isolate the method from the ideological content. The word dialectical alone does not clarify the meaning of ideological theatre because within the growing trend of de-ideologization and technicism in the West, the emphasis on technique isolates it from content. By making use of the technological revolution in advanced industrial societies, the dramatists could produce a new kind of advanced bourgeois theatre which suppresses instruction and spreads entertainment which serves to maintain the social values of the bourgeoisie. Whereas the dynamism and richness of the content of Brecht's theatre lie in the relation between the content and the social development of the age. Within the etymological meaning of

141. Andrzej Wirth, "Brecht's **Fatzer:** Experiments in Discourse Making" Drama Review (Vol. 22, No. 4, Dec. 1978), pp. 57-63.

ideology as science of ideas, the theatre should represent the dynamic relation between social change and the evolution of civilization. From this angle the theatre becomes ideological, in which the dialectical relation between the ideological content and the technique is directed by the content. Consequently, the future of Brechtian theatre is a determinant of the future path of the theatre. Hence, any attempt in the future to synthesize the content and technique of alienation, should relie upon the revelation of the means of eliminating alienation proceeding from an awareness of the necessity of social change.

Outside the sphere of the Lehrstucke, some attempts were made to revive Brecht's epic plays by adapting them to the historical changes in society and presenting them in a new, contemporary interpretaion. The most notable experiment is the performance of **The Good Person of Setzuan** by the Residential College Players', Ann Arbor University, U.S.A. The focus in the performance was on the then going on Vietnam war as well as other topical issues such as racism sexism, military service, with the intention of demonstrating the actors' and director's anti- imperialist stance towards these issues. The objectives and results of the production are reported by M. Zimmerman : ...

> Written over thirty years ago, this play **(The Good Person)** has a generalizable structure which is ripe with and conducive to possible connections with concrete history at many different moments in the history of capitalism. To point to just a few: I. Shen Te and Yang Sun have aspirations similar to those of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie on the verge of facing their moment truth; like this bourgeoisie, Shen Te turns to her gods for help, only to find they are leaving. 2. Brecht's picture of a starving child and Shen Te's illusion that such starvation can be averted by (and, in fact, justifies) capitalist development and exploitation : these are contradictions we known from the Vietnam War-ones vitalized by the airlift of Vietnam orphans to the U.S. 3. The Peking of today is no longer the Peking of **The Good Woman.** Rather, present-day capitalism, as exemplified in Detroit-Setzuan, is the maker of orphans and human misery; and Ann Arbor is the training center for the misery makers and menders — the future

> capitalists and reformers' — who will make their living and earn the possible happiness of their children by displacements from systematic international and local immiseration. It is in a displacement from Ann Arbor's academic utopia and Brecht's Peking, to Detroit and Saigon, that the proper Brechtian coordinates for situating the play can be found. A fully operative represenation based on such coordinates should generate a recoil from larger issues into the heart of RC (Residential College) itself.(142)

The impact of Brecht's theatre on the dramatic writings of the dramatists in the Arab Region, particularly in Egypt, is seen in a few experiments to adapt or reinterpret from an Arabic viewpoint, Brecht's epic plays. For instance Alfred Farag's adaptation of **Mr. Puntila and his man Matti** under the Arabic title : "Ali-Ganah Al-Tabrizi Wa Tabiahu Quffa", and the late Naguib Sourour's adaptation of the Threepenny Opera, entitled "Malek al Shahateen" or King of Beggars. In both adaptations, the national folklore, ballads, figures (the narrator in the traditional folk ballad), language, traditional social relations were substituted for the original ones in order to introduce local colour and to approximate the performance to the Egyptian audience's consciousness.

The possibilities which Brecht's theatre can offer for the presentation of an epic theatre in Third World countries, has been the subject of the Colloquy held in East Berlin in 1976. During the seminars, many experiments were presented and discussed from India, Venzuela, Cuba, Philippines, Tanzania, Uganda, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt, under the general topic depicting social reality in the theatre of those countries. The forms of theatre presented at the Colloquy (particularly those from Tanzania, Uganda and India) demonstrated the use and functioning of national traditional cultural forms for the presentation of contemporary social reality in a Brechtian epic style. In the discussions, Alfred Farag commented on the experiments by expressing his own considerations, as

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142. Marc Zimmerman, **op. cit.,** p. 130.

a dramatist of a Third World country, as to the possibilities of using Brecht's epic style as a springboard for the development and enrichment of the theatre in those countries in general, and in the Arab Region in particular :

> ...one must approach national tradition dialectically... One must not only maintain traditional culture, but one must develop new forms at the same time. Ours is an ancient country, and our language has hardly changed within some 1500 years. So the citizen of an Arab country lives in a culture which has lasted for 1500 years. I think we have a very definite problem with time... I think the Egyptians, perhaps the Arabs, live more in the past than in the present... On the other hand, we can see that an international western model exists in our country that is propagated through the mass media... The ordinary person is forced to look back and gain his experiences from there, or to concentrate on the TV screen and gain false experience... We have to note that the people change, and they change their own folk art... But we also have to note that folklore, when put on in particular and mature artistic form, is accepted by the people... Therefore, not only the subject or ideas of the plays are important, but also the quality of the form. We must see our traditional art, not with the eyes of archeologists, but as artists. We must see and apply it critically... we must mould national peculiarities in the art of theatre... We have used parables from ancient literature to show our contemporaries that the ideas of socialism have a long history. We want to show our audience that human beings have always had a certain feeling of social justice. We use parables and stories, which people know very well, to show them that socialist ideas and socialist struggle are as old as history itself. We do it because we are continually accused of using foreign ideas. We want to show that the social struggle is historical that it is traditional, that it is authentic.(143)

Farag's ideas about traditional and modern forms in the theatre, are expressive of the general dilemma faced by the inteligentsia of Third

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143. Alfred Farag, **Op. Cit.,** pp. 58-59.

World countries in general and those in the Arab Region in particular, namely, how to solve the problem of authenticity and modernization in society and, consequently, in literature. In other words, how to be modern and authentic at the same time. This problem poses an issue worthy of discussion. However, since this task is outside the scope of the present work, we suggest that it could be an opportunity for a topic of further research.

Our comment on the various experiments will be an attempt to deduce from those heterogeneous experiments conclusions that point to the path of Brecht's theatre, guided by Brecht's own theoretical formulations and practical application of alienation. All the previously mentioned projects and experiments to develop Brecht's theatre, either by using the Lehrstucke or the epic plays, are a proof that for a real understanding of the essence of Brecht's philosophical theatre the methodology is a necessary starting point after which a system could be reached. Out of the method grows the system which, due to its openness, lends itself to further development. The movement to and fro from a closed to an open system, through the method, is the future path of Brecht's theatre. The realization of this movement depends on the historical development because the movement is derived from and corresponds to the movement of history.

Trying to visualize the future of post-Brechtian theatre in an advanced phase of civilization, which could assume a qualitatively new function, we will proceed from three important statements made by Brecht : "One should not start from the good old things, but the bad new ones. It is not a matter of disintegrating the technique, but of extending it. Man's humanity will not be restored by his movement out of the masses, but by his joining the masses"(144) Brecht's statements are dialectical for-

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144. "Es wird nicht angeknupft an das gute Alte, sondern an das schlechte Neue. Es handelt sich nicht um den Abbau der Technik sondern um ihren Ausbau. Der Mensch wird nicht wieder Mensch, indem er aus der Masse herausgeht, sondern indem er hineingeht in die Masse". **Schrften zur Literature und Kunst** (Frankfurt am Main : Subrkamp, 1968), p. 112.

mulations of the possibilities of developing his own theatre for they contain the positive as well as the negative elements in one dialectical unity. The first two statements concern the problem of artistic creativity, that, is the relation between the author and the text in the process of the text's realization. Whereas the third statement refers to the problem of reception, that is, the relation between the audience and the performed text, which implies a particular kind of audience and a particular way of reception. These two processes, which represent the two sides of the dialectics, in a civilizationally developed, i.e. de-alienated, society free from exploitation and class struggle, will transcend social consciousness to cosmic consciousness. Within this highly developed consciousness which reflects man's harmony with society, the struggle will be elevated on a higher level, namely, with nature which is man's original struggle to control and humanize nature. However, this struggle will be restored on a higher, technological level. The social and technological revolutions will enable man in the future to have more control on nature. Hence, man's alienation from nature within a cosmic consciousness will be the subject of a Brechtian theatre in such a highly developed phase of civilization. While depicting that alienation, however, the function of such a Brechtian theatre would be the creation and enhancement of the enjoyment of labour, which will be a free, de-alienated labour, the theatre being an important aspect of labour in which man produces himself both physically and mentally. By fully realizing the function of a theatre based on the idea of art-production, the post-Brechtian theatre will realize Mayerhold's vision of the future theatre, that is, theatre in an advanced socialist society :

> In the past the actor has always conformed with the society for which his art was intended. In future the actor must go even further in relating his technique to the industrial situation. For he will be working in a society where labour is no longer regarded as a curse but as a joyful, vital necessity. In these conditions of ideal labour art clearly requires a new foundation.(145)

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145. Edward Braun (edit.), **Meyerhold on Theatre** (London : Methean, 1969), p. 197.

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